



# INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY...

JAMES DRUMMOND



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**James Drummond**

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**INTRODUCTION  
TO THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY**

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1894



# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## STUDY OF THEOLOGY

BY

JAMES DRUMMOND, LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

*Τὸ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐρευνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ*

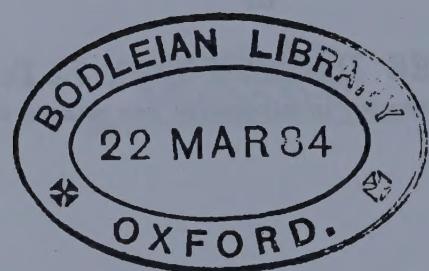
and with an appropriate place, in a collective argumentation, supersede them all.

In determining the character and position of the present topic which any young reader I have yet thought it necessary to add, so far as length to the opinions of others may entitle me to give, the student will

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## PREFACE.

THE Introduction to the Study of Theology, which is here offered to the public, has been delivered, during the last few sessions, in the form of a course of lectures, to Students of Manchester New College. It is hoped that it will be more serviceable to them in its present shape, and that some few beyond the circle for whom it is more immediately intended will find it of use. Its object is to deal, not with the *matter* but with the scientific *form* of Theology, and to bring before the student the nature, method, and mutual relations of the various branches of theological study, so that he may see more clearly the bearing of his labours, and view the several departments of his work, not as incoherent fragments, but as constituent members, each with an appropriate place, in a collective organism which embraces them all.

In determining the character and position of the numerous topics which come under review I have not thought it necessary to allude at any length to the opinions of others, being anxious rather to give the student a clear survey of the country to be traversed than to encumber him with details which might only confuse his vision. I have therefore contented myself

with referring to a few well-known books when it seemed desirable to defend my own position or to illustrate the possible variety of treatment. The Bibliography, which forms so useful a feature of Hagenbach's "Encyklopädie," has been omitted, both to bring the volume within a more moderate compass, and because it seems best for each teacher to recommend such books as, under any given circumstances, he may deem most suitable for the beginner.

It has been my endeavour, in accordance with the principles on which Manchester New College is founded, to treat the subject with impartiality; and while some, no doubt, will discover and reprobate the coloured medium from which human thought is never exempt, others may see only coldness and indifference in the attempt to be just. The number, however, is increasing of those who think that Theology should have the same freedom as physical science, and not be always viewed through a sectarian haze. In pleading for perfect liberty in theological research we ask for no more than is admitted to be the indispensable condition of truth in every other subject of human inquiry. Liberty does not mean exemption from the restraining laws of thought and evidence, but submission to those laws, without regard to inherited prejudice or party demands. In pressing upon the young student the claims of freedom, we do not mean that he may "believe what he likes," that he may follow mere subjective fancies, or treat with disdain the past ac-

quisitions of Theology, or reject without solid reason what his teacher presents as ascertained fact, but on the contrary, that he is bound to seek for the fullest knowledge and to follow the laws of evidence which belong to his subject. It is only through this higher service that mental freedom is secured. If a similar plea is not made when we begin to teach astronomy or geology, that is only because it is no longer necessary. We cannot say that in Theology the time has yet come when important differences are discussed without heat, and when party allegiance never disturbs the vision of truth. Till that time has come we must point out to the learner that large, serene, and candid soul, without which he can never hear what the Spirit saith, unconfused by earthly din.

The origin of this work in the friendly intercourse of the Lecture-room will account for the occasional retention of the direct form of address, which may appear less suited to a treatise intended for perusal. I have, however, omitted a lecture which I still prefer to deliver orally, relating to the personal habits of the theological student, and to the practices of our own College. A similar lecture, from his own point of view, might be usefully given by any teacher who thought the present volume a suitable handbook for his class.

The student will readily perceive that it is impossible for one mind to master the vast range of subjects which here come under review, and he

may be alarmed by the almost boundless claims of theological learning. It is not, however, expected that any single mind should be versed in every subdivision of Theology. Out of the immense mass of material the scholar must select one or more departments to which he will especially devote his attention; but whatever department he may prefer he will study it with more interest and with wider sympathy if he clearly perceive its position and bearing in the complete circle of theological knowledge.

Owing to the limitation of human faculty here indicated I can hardly hope to have altogether avoided mistakes in travelling over so wide a field, with many parts of which I have no special acquaintance; but I trust that they will be found neither numerous nor serious. I must express my obligations to my colleagues, and particularly to Dr. Martineau, for some corrections and suggestions; but, while I have reason to hope that the work will on the whole meet with their approval, they are in no way responsible for its plan or execution, or for the opinions which it enunciates. Such as it is, it is now sent forth with the earnest wish that it may render some modest service to the cause of genuine scholarship and spiritual faith, and help some few wayfarers towards the fresh uplands of Christian love and communion.

HAMPSTEAD, 20th October 1883.

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## PART I.

### NATURE, IMPORTANCE, AND PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY.

#### SECTION I.

##### *Definition, Basis, and Compass of Theology.*

THEOLOGY denotes, according to the strict meaning of the word, the science<sup>1</sup> of God. This definition of our subject, however, is frequently considered unsatisfactory; for it seems on one side to be too narrow, and on the other to be too comprehensive. It may suggest a purely abstract and speculative inquiry, which is far removed from the recognised practice of Christian theologians. It is their province to unfold in a systematic way the contents of the Christian revelation, to interpret the spiritual life of the Church, and to establish a theoretic basis for its activities; and theology, therefore, is not so much the science of God as the exposition of a great historical fact, in which the Divine

<sup>1</sup> For convenience, I shall occasionally use the word science in its widest sense, to denote reflective and formulated knowledge, and shall not confine it to the study of phenomena.

and the human meet one another. On the other hand, if our definition be strained so as to include a human and historical interest, it must comprise far more than Christianity. Theology will have to survey impartially all the great religions of the world, and to take up Christianity among the rest, simply for the purpose of illustrating its own philosophical conclusions. The theologian who followed this method would be like a lawyer who, instead of devoting his special attention to English law and the practice of English courts, expatiated in the principles of jurisprudence as exemplified in the legislation of various times and races.

Notwithstanding these objections, I am disposed to adhere to the etymological meaning of our term, because, so far as they are really valid indications of the true lines of study, they apply, not to the definition, but to the interpretation of it. Each of them demands a few remarks.

A science of God naturally includes a consideration of the sources from which our knowledge is derived, and of the relations in which he stands to existences which are usually distinguished from him by difference of name. Now, as God cannot become an object of knowledge apart from his relations, these two orders of inquiry coalesce. It is as related to nature and to man that it is possible for us to know God; and it is from the phenomena of nature and of the human consciousness that our knowledge must be drawn. In saying this I am by no means prejudging the question of a

supernatural revelation ; for this, if given, must have been disclosed in consciousness, and comes, whether normally or abnormally, under the head of human experience. Neither do I deny that God may stand in relation to higher beings than man ; but these are not directly cognisable by us, and, if known at all, can be so only on the authority of some one possessed of superhuman knowledge. Prior, then, to the discovery of such an authority, nature and man exhaust for us the sources of theological knowledge and the objects of Divine relationship. Starting from nature we contemplate God as the permanent Cause of the phenomenal world. Here our inquiry is simply speculative ; and though it is difficult for any spiritually-minded man to disengage the religious interest from so exalted a theme, yet it is one which may be pursued as a pure science—that is, solely for the truth which it contains, and without any thought of its connection with human needs and hopes, and its application to human practice. But the case is altered when we start from man. We breathe no more the cold and bracing air of abstract thought, but are plunged into the burning struggle of living interests, and the whole vast range of religious experience and history opens to our view. Various Churches put in their claims ; divergent types of thought ask for recognition ; and rising altitudes of religious illumination and prophetic fervour attract our eyes towards one resplendent summit. While keeping paramount the love of truth, we can no longer seek it

without any ulterior aim. We cannot forget that our quest must affect our deepest personal life, and has an immediate bearing on the structure and the purpose of society. Thus theology passes from the domain of pure science, and its truths are now unfolded, not merely for their own sake, but, as in law and medicine, for the sake of their influence upon the highest form of human welfare. It is apparent, then, that a science of God cannot linger in barren though sublime abstractions, but must descend into the concrete facts of history and immerse itself in the problems of our social organism ; and so it may ramify into directions which, at first sight, seem to have little connection with our definition of theology. But whatever may be our immediate pursuit, whether historical, philological, exegetical, or critical, it is only through its union, more or less close, with the thought of God and his relation to nature or to man, that it properly comes under the survey of the theologian. The study of Greek, for instance, on account of the beauty of its literature, is not theological ; but the same study, conducted because it is the key to the interpretation of certain religious books which record some of the profoundest thoughts and experiences of the human soul, and thus increase our knowledge of God, enters thereby the province of theology. I think, therefore, that our definition is at once sufficiently comprehensive of that which properly belongs to our science, and exclusive of that which is alien to it.

We must now turn to the other objection. If, by

the process which I have indicated, we come to include under theology the varying forms of faith and the history of Churches, must we not stand as impartial critics before them all, and refuse to give, by the length and minuteness of our treatment, a disproportionate prominence to any? If, in a matter of this kind, it were possible for us to follow the rules of abstract science, and take our position above the world as disinterested spectators of its movements, we might be forced to give an affirmative answer. And to this extent we accede, in our College, to the scientific demand; we esteem every inquiry legitimate, and lay the ban upon no conclusion which is honestly reached and reverently held. The exclusive credibility of the Christian religion is not assumed at starting, but forms of faith the most remote from our own are open to sympathetic study, and the footsteps of God are traced even across the wilds where uncivilised men first sought for the Divine. But it is obvious that it would be impossible, in the time at our disposal, to discuss all religions with equal fulness, and it becomes a practical necessity to select one of the richest and highest types of belief for more exhaustive treatment. This being the case, Christianity commends itself by indisputable claims to our attention. In the first place, whatever may be our doctrinal conclusions, our own religious consciousness has grown up under the influence of Christianity, and therefore we cannot give an intelligent interpretation of that which is deepest and most per-

manent within ourselves, of that which lies nearest to our investigation, and accompanies us either as a distorting or a revealing medium of perception into every inquiry, unless we make ourselves acquainted with the genesis and development of Christian thought and worship. Again, Christianity is not only one of the great religions of the world, it is the professed religion of the most cultivated and progressive nations, and its sacred books, apart from all dogmatic authority that may be supposed to attach to them, confessedly occupy a lofty, if not a supreme and unique position in literature of this class. And lastly, it is among Christians that those of you who choose the ministry as a profession will be called to labour; and, whether with reforming zeal you place yourselves outside this ancient faith, or, impressed by the majesty of its teaching, range yourselves among its disciples, it is equally incumbent upon you to obtain the fullest critical knowledge of its form and the deepest experiential knowledge of its spirit, in order that you may neither assail nor defend it with the crudities of an ignorant and shallow fanaticism. For these reasons, while it appears to me arbitrary, at least at the outset, to confine theology to the study of the Christian religion, that religion must nevertheless engage a large share of our attention; and we shall all the more cheerfully accord to it what might otherwise seem an undue proportion of our time, if, in the progress of our inquiries, we come to view it as (what I believe it to be) the purest reflection of the

thought of God, and a revelation of the highest ideal of human duty.

## SECTION II.

### *Importance of Theological Study.*

Having thus obtained some general conception of the nature and extent of theological study, we shall have little difficulty in admitting that it ought to be a recognised and honoured part of a liberal education. The truths, if they be truths, which it brings before us are of the very highest moment; for they affect the scope and colouring of every part of our lives, and stand like solemn witnesses and appraisers of our most private and intimate concerns. And though the grandest of these truths may be a source of strength and gladness to people who have neither time nor capacity for an elaborate theological training, it is the part of an educated man to form an intellectual estimate of his beliefs, and with clear and instructed judgment consciously to choose his way among the conditions of his time and country. To accept without consideration the traditional creed of the party into which you have been born is credulity; to reject without anxious reflection the sublime claims of religion at the bidding of the most recent hypothesis in science or criticism is frivolity. No education can be complete which leaves us a prey to either of these kinds of intellectual vice, and does not accustom us to exercise a balanced, cautious, and

sober reason upon the highest subjects of human thought.

But if we depart from this highest ground for making theology an integral part of liberal culture, we cannot forget the vast interest attaching to it as a factor in history. Regarded in this light, it demands the serious consideration even of the student who is most convinced of the hollowness of its pretensions. The persistency of religious ideas, their dominating influence through long periods of advancing civilisation, their trumpet-call to freedom ringing loud and clear over the wail of their sullen conservatism, their glorification into saintly beauty and heroic self-sacrifice, their corruption into sanguinary and brutish bigotry,—these remain amid the great land-marks of history, and cannot be neglected by any one who would understand the growth and cohesion of society, or trace back the circumstances of his own time to their roots in the distant past. If the quarrels of Greek states and the political doctrines of Greek thinkers, if the march of Roman armies and the binding sway of Roman law, if the dissolution of the ancient empire and the rise of modern nations, be brought under the notice of all educated men, can we afford to neglect the growth of monotheistic faith among the Jews, the origin and development of Christian dogma, the struggle of the Church with paganism, its partition into Eastern and Western, the dissolution of the latter, after centuries of absolute dominion, into the various sects which charac-

terise our present world? Whether the Christianity around us be our glory or our shame, we ought at least to understand it; and this we can do only through that thorough, patient, and sympathetic study which we so gladly bestow on scientific or classical subjects.

The soundness of these remarks would be generally admitted were it not for the attitude of dogmatic authority which has been for the most part assumed by the Churches of Christendom. In consequence of this attitude it is supposed that religious teaching must be directed mainly to the exposition and maintenance of the doctrines approved by the parents or guardians of the youthful learner, and any attempt to give religious instruction from a different point of view is resented as an infringement of the rights of conscience. This jealousy of interference with private conviction is a healthy feeling, so long as the doctrines from which we dissent are inculcated dogmatically and in the interests of a particular Church. We are entitled to protest when the pliable intelligence of our children is twisted, by the force of social penalty in this world and threats of perdition in the next, in the direction of opinions which we deem superstitious or irrational. The School or College which is intended for the nation should allow no privilege to any sect, but content itself with teaching impartially what all may without scruple receive. This legitimate position, however, has led practically to a conclusion which the friends of lofty and comprehensive education may well deplore. Under the banner of reli-

gious equality the cry is raised for secular education in public institutions, while theological training is reserved for the more private efforts of parties or individuals. Now I am quite aware that secular education may be imparted from the purest motives and with the most conscientious devotion to truth, and that a College which simply ignores in its tutorial capacity the doctrines of all the sects need not thereby become "godless;" but I say that a University which was forbidden to deal with the grandest themes, and probe the deepest questions of human duty and destiny, would be a mutilated University, and no longer deserve its privileges. The exclusion of theology from our educational curriculum may act disastrously in two ways. It seems to sanction the opinion that an education is complete which never climbs the higher levels of thought or touches the diviner side of our nature, and thus virtually joins in the sneer of the shallow worldling at all that belongs to the ideal realm, and that lifts whomsoever it has found to empyrean heights. A youth who has passed through this unfinished course is still unprepared to face the hard problems of our day, and loses his intellectual grasp as soon as he is confronted by the feeblest champion of a pretentious sciolism. Or if he escape this danger he may fall into the other evil which I mentioned. Unable to do without religion, he knows it only in some sectarian form, and, finding it perhaps in unreconciled antagonism with his secular knowledge, he necessarily blurs the boundaries of the latter, and

sacrifices his science to his faith. The University, which ought with its large wisdom to have lifted him to the broad platform of humanity, and co-ordinated the various branches of study into one harmonious organism, has, under the specious plea of liberality, betrayed its trust, and relegated to the one-sided zeal of controversialists the very subject which ought to be treated with the severest impartiality, the most penetrating and sympathetic insight, and the lofty comprehensiveness of a soul which has been raised by communion with eternal things above the tumults and divisions of the world.

These remarks apply, with some obvious qualification, to those Universities in which the theological faculty is pledged to the inculcation of certain specified doctrines; for such a faculty belongs, not to the nation, but to a party, is obliged in fairness to permit all dissentients to refrain from attending its classes, and is precluded by its very constitution from meeting the requirements of a large and unsectarian culture. The remedy lies, not in its abolition, but in its liberation, and the appointment of men who shall be pledged only to faithful research and loyalty to their own convictions, and who shall be as free as any teachers of physical science to lay before their classes the results of the most recent investigations. In thus humbling itself and relinquishing its airs of authority, theology will be exalted, and regain the intelligent interest which in our time it has forfeited for so many cultivated minds, and men will

render to the modesty of its reason and learning the homage which they refuse to its imperious and ignorant demand.

Having thus endeavoured to vindicate the general right of theology to a place in liberal culture, we may proceed to make a few remarks on its special importance to the minister of religion.

Although there is nothing to prevent a layman from becoming an accomplished theologian, nevertheless the clergy and ministers of the various churches are the acknowledged theologians of the country, and so far as the ministry is a learned profession theology must constitute its special department of scholarship. The advisability of attaining the highest possible culture in every walk of life need not be here enforced ; and all that has been said about the position of theology in a scheme of liberal education will apply to the training of ministers. But more than this is true. As religion is the side of human existence with which they have especially to deal, theology must take a foremost place in their studies ; and after the completion of their arts course, in which they obtain a wider survey of the world of knowledge, the intellectual aspects of religion must be selected as the field to which they will devote their most assiduous care. As a surgeon must acquire a more minute and exact knowledge of bodily structure than is necessary for the general public, so the professional theologian must follow his subject into more abstruse details, and investigate these with greater

scientific accuracy, than can be deemed essential for those whose speciality lies in a different direction. It is clear, therefore, that even if we aim at nothing higher than maintaining the status of the ministry in intellectual society, and securing for it the respect which is due to a learned profession, the most serious use ought to be made of the few years which can be saved for studious preparation.

But we may assume that higher views and more ardent hopes have directed the choice of students for the ministry, and that they wish to make themselves felt as a religious power among their fellow-men. How does this wish stand related to learning? Religious and philanthropic enthusiasm is sometimes impatient of the dry processes of study, and the fresh inspiration of youth shrinks from the chilling ways of criticism. This aversion to the pure, cold light of reason, however, is not to be encouraged. To the highest order of mind the intellectual treatment of religion is a necessity, and our occasional desire to escape from it is a sign of spiritual weakness rather than of the massive strength of genuine faith. In every class of society the force of a powerful understanding makes itself felt and respected; and without an intellect as weighty and as full as discipline and study can render it, the minister must fail to reach the highest religious influence of which his nature is capable. Enthusiasm without the control of cultured reason is like a mountain torrent which, with its lawless rush of waters, ploughs up roads and destroys

bridges, and interrupts the orderly traffic of civilised life; and only when it is curbed by a directing force as mighty as its own does it resemble a deep and stately river, which, confined between its solid banks, bears on its bosom the commerce of the world. The student, then, who desires hereafter to exercise the purest influence will gladly avail himself of the opportunity which his years at College afford to lay the foundations of intellectual acquisition, that in the future his zeal may be guided by wisdom, and, safe from the perils of a one-sided and immature nature, he may put forth the power of a full and harmonious manhood.

If for a moment we glance in greater detail at the duties of the minister, we shall arrive at a similar conclusion. His most distinctive vocation is that of the preacher. Now it may be said that as the preacher ought to exercise a prophetic function, and make it his supreme aim to elevate the character of his hearers by appealing to their heart and conscience, no learning can be required for the fulfilment of his duty, but only a soul caught up into communion with God, and lips that have been touched with the sacred fire. In this position there is a certain element of truth. The preacher's characteristic influence is derived from a higher realm than that of learning, and nowhere is a pedantic display of book-lore and an indulgence in the ponderous technicalities of scholarship less in place than in the pulpit. But for this very reason we require genuine scholars, and not smatterers. It is not on the former but the

latter that learning sits so uneasily that it is always dropping off in inappropriate places. The technical knowledge of the theologian is seldom required in the pulpit; but the thorough training of the preacher will be apparent in the easy grasp and luminous exposition of his subject, and the unaffected way in which he introduces just the amount of information which is really necessary. If learning makes but little appearance in the finished sermon, it is of the greatest value in its preparation. One who undertakes to write discourses for an audience which may include many cultivated men, ought to be able to read his text in the original language and consult the best commentaries, and ought as far as possible to be abreast of the advancing knowledge of the day, that he may not fall into stupid mistakes, and by exhibiting his subject in false relations excite the ridicule rather than kindle the aspiration of the listeners. If a display of knowledge is not demanded, still less desirable is a display of ignorance, and that pulpit is desecrated which receives the ministrations of a slovenly and ill-stored mind.

These remarks apply to preaching in the ordinary exercise of ministerial duty; but we must not forget that there are occasions when a minister is called upon to defend his faith by an intellectual statement of his position, and his congregation are entitled to expect in him the ability to render this service. I need scarcely remark that such a duty is one of the highest solemnity,

and cannot be adequately discharged without a mind at once versed in some of the more abstruse departments of literature and disciplined in the exercise of severe and exact thought. The vulgar and vapid declamation with which dogmas are defended in some quarters is simply blasphemy against the Spirit of truth; and though the religious fire must be ultimately lighted from the torch of a living faith, the difficulties of the perplexed inquirer must be met on intellectual ground, and not even the purest religious insight can, without the aid of the understanding, discover that form of truth in which the restless mind of our age may for a time find repose and satisfaction.

Another duty which the faithful minister will endeavour to fulfil is that of teacher. This duty devolves upon him on account of the two-fold social relation of theology on which we have already touched. An enlightened view of religion ought not to be confined to a profession, but to be the common property of educated men; and yet theology is a subject sufficiently large to form a distinct professional interest. The student, therefore, who makes religion his speciality naturally becomes the instructor of a wider circle, and, far more than in other learned professions, must feel that he holds his knowledge in trust for the benefit of mankind. The physician need not read medical lectures to his patients, nor the lawyer discourse to his clients on the history and principles of jurisprudence. But one who stands in the peculiar relation which a minister bears

to his congregation must find it one of his most congenial occupations, as well as one of his most imperative duties, to endeavour to awaken and satisfy among his younger friends that rational interest in religion which belongs to every pure and generous mind; nor will he be content, without a struggle, to see them drifting ignorantly away from the nobler aims of life, and losing their intellectual, and then their spiritual hold on that ideal world which alone is real and eternal. Whether he engage in this task through the Sunday class for children, or the more elaborate lessons and lectures designed for older people, or in any other way that circumstances may suggest, he will still require the discriminating tact and judgment, the clear and precise thought, the special information, and the large outlook upon the world of knowledge, which characterise the well-trained scholar.

Lastly, in his visiting the minister will sometimes encounter doubts and difficulties which it is for him, so far as he can, to lay to rest. The social air at present is full of unanswered questionings; and thrice-blessed is he who can look calmly upon the mental strife, and, bearing up the doubter on his own brave and sympathising breast, teach him to see the better land beyond. To the mere dogmatist this path of usefulness is closed. To him the perplexed mind, with its dim imaginings of something nobler than the traditional faith, or its sensitive and conscientious reason bowing before facts that seem too hard and stern for religion to surmount, will

never unveil itself; but to the sympathy of true culture and refinement it will unfold its generally silent depths, and will seek the strong guidance of one who has trodden for himself the perilous way of research, has learned by experience to take a just measure of intellectual difficulties, and has carved out a faith of his own. He who would avail himself of these rare opportunities of helping some brother soul up the mount of truth, must prepare himself by thorough and independent study, and prove by the solidity of his thought and knowledge that he deserves the confidence of intelligent men whose minds are in search of a rational and sustaining faith, but whose means of theological culture have been unavoidably inferior to his. Thus only may he hope to bring the needed help, and to wield that highest authority which belongs to him who is really versed in the subject which he undertakes to treat.

These remarks may perhaps encourage you in what I doubt not is your serious purpose, to devote your best efforts to mastering the studies which are prescribed in this College. It is impossible to promise you a path of continual verdure, and unfailing streams of intellectual excitement. Sometimes it will be necessary to traverse dull and seemingly barren regions, far away from the warm and luminous fields where religion worships and seeks her inspiration. But if you have the proper interest in your subject as a whole, it will suffice to carry you over the more desolate portions; and even where a higher impulse may fail, you will still have the gratifi-

cation of acquiring fresh knowledge and exercising your critical faculties. You will remember, too, that in a complicated structure the least inviting parts are essential to the beauty of the whole ; and I shall endeavour to show farther on that our various topics are united in a single organism, and that even where they may seem for a time least connected with one another they are severally contributing to one large result.

In what has been said above there have been many allusions to scholarship. Let us distinguish this from mere acquaintance with books. Scholarship comprises two elements, trained faculty and exact knowledge, and of these the former is, to say the least, as important as the latter. Men immersed in affairs sometimes despise, not wholly without reason, those who see the world only through the medium of books, and there are few characters less attractive than the pedant's. But the genuine scholar has a mind of a higher order. His directing impulse is the unadulterated love of truth. This, like a central sun, communicates its own ardour and purity to all his pursuits, and carries with it as its attendants candour, impartiality, humility, independence, a cautious boldness, a comprehensiveness which knows how to be exact, a precision which never interferes with breadth of sympathy or insight into larger possibilities than have been yet secured. Scholarship is to intellect what saintliness is to character ; and you must never forget amid your studies that you have not only to increase your knowledge, but to purify your

judgment, to discipline your thought, to enlarge your views, and to train your faculty for conducting original research and drawing independent conclusions. Form the highest ideal that you can of the scholar's vocation, and endeavour in your own persons to make that vocation worthy of respect.

### SECTION III.

#### *Principles of Theological Study.*

These remarks lead me to speak more particularly of the College where, for the present, your studies are to be carried on, and of the principles on which it is based. We shall perhaps better apprehend the purpose of a theological College, and the principles which it ought to follow, if for a few moments we consider its relation to that larger institution which seems dedicated to kindred aims,—I mean the Church.

If we regard the Church simply in its social aspect, as an agency intended to have a religious effect upon mankind, we may say that its primary aim is to train the religious *life*, to quicken the higher affections and ennable the conduct, while that of the College on the other hand is to train religious *thought*, and impart information in regard to religious subjects. Neither of these aims can, I believe, be carried out independently of the other; but the relative order in which they are placed must seriously affect the practical arrangements

of the two institutions which adopt them. The most salient feature of the Church consists of the public services of religion, in which worship is offered, and the accepted teaching of a spiritual faith and a lofty morality is pressed home to the heart and conscience. Now for such services to have their due efficacy it is practically needful that there should be a large amount of intellectual agreement in the congregation. Whatever tends to excite the critical faculty or provoke the repugnance of unbelief or of different belief disturbs the calmness of devotion, and defeats the very object for which the worshippers assemble. Their object is to surrender themselves with unbounded veneration and love to God as contemplated under the form of their highest and purest ideal, and allow eternal things to come and make their own solemn impression on the soul; but this cannot be if all the time they are in a state of intellectual revolt against the doctrines which are implied or enforced. It is what we *believe* that operates upon the character, and he who would deeply move us must exhibit *this* in its beauty and power, and press upon our assenting conscience its application to our daily life. But notwithstanding this practical necessity, a Church which would nurture the liberty of the children of God must make provision for advancing knowledge and changing forms of thought, and will therefore refuse to bind its members by the terms of an authoritative creed. The amount of agreement which is requisite for the attainment of the highest ends of common worship

need not be defined, but ought to be left to the kindly hand of nature to determine in each instance. Fealty to truth demands freedom in the pursuit and the utterance of truth, and this the Church must loyally recognise. So far as pledges and obligatory terms of communion are concerned, it may be as free as any scientific or secularistic institute; and yet for the realisation of its own specific purpose it will draw together, by a kind of spontaneous concurrence, those who have a very real, though undefined intellectual sympathy.

In the College this necessity for a general intellectual agreement vanishes. Not only do the acquisition of knowledge and the search for truth demand the most absolute freedom for their successful prosecution, but the very differences which are a disturbance to our higher moods of devotion and self-surrender, serve to stimulate the understanding, to clarify the judgment, and to widen the horizon of our mental view. Nothing tends so powerfully to smooth away our prejudices, and give us large and tolerant minds, as friendly intercourse with men of the most diverse tendencies of thought, and frank discussion of conflicting opinions. Although, therefore, a Church may to a large extent fulfil its noblest functions notwithstanding the imposition of articles of belief on its members, a theological College which submits to a similar restriction thereby renounces the very purpose for which it ought to exist. The moment you are pledged to arrive at certain opinions,

it becomes a mockery to speak of investigation; and you are not really pursuing knowledge if you are obliged to overlook or explain away every fact which seems opposed to your foregone conclusion. In every subject but theology this is so readily admitted as hardly to require discussion. In physical science, for instance, you expect the highest results only from those who are at liberty to go whithersoever observation and reasoning may conduct them, and the moment this liberty is denied the scientific spirit is cut away at the roots. It is said, however, that theology is in a very different position, because it rests on the basis of supernatural revelation, and therefore it is bound to check the vagaries which may lead the individual mind beyond the enclosure of its divinely-sanctioned dogmas. In answer to this plea it is not necessary to deny that there may be this sacred finality in religious knowledge. To bar by any prohibition your acceptance even of the dogma of papal infallibility, would be to violate the very principle for which I am contending. But whether a miraculous communication of truth not otherwise ascertainable has been really made is one of the subjects for inquiry, and in an institution where we are to seek for larger knowledge and sounder views, we must be free to embrace whichever side of the controversy may approve itself to our sober judgment. And further, even if we were already convinced upon rational grounds that a dogmatic revelation had been given, nevertheless each article of that revelation would

continue to be a legitimate subject for research, because the truth or falsity of that article would be a part of the evidence by which the whole was either confirmed or weakened. For example, if we were convinced by general reasons that the Bible was infallible, it would still be competent for us to consider whether the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis was scientifically correct, or whether the narratives of the infancy of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke could be reconciled with one another or with historical probability, because an unfavourable verdict in these cases would shake or destroy the opinion to which we had previously assented. Thus, as students of theology, we must keep our field of inquiry always open, and endeavour to address ourselves to each question as it arises, with a single desire to learn the truth. Nor let us fear that in thus acting we shall outrage any piety. The lover of truth may make many mistakes, but his mistakes are better than the sound doctrine of one who is enamoured only of his own opinions. The one discerns the spirit of truth, though her form is clouded; the other surveys her shape, clearly cut, but robbed of its heavenly expression. Love of truth is part of our love of God, and to those who seek her, light shall at length arise in their darkness.

We must now enter on a different line of consideration, which may seem at first, but only at first sight, to qualify the perfection of our intellectual freedom. The student of religion ought to bring to his investigations

a religious spirit. What! some one will exclaim, come to our inquiries full of superstitious prepossessions, and virtually prejudge the whole question before we begin! Is this your freedom indeed, to put your reason under the direction of prejudices born in the nursery, and look at the exploded beliefs of mankind through a haze of inherited foolishness? No, no, if you want freedom you must bring to your theology a mind blank of religious impression, and lifted into sublime indifference towards the great problems of duty and destiny, and then only can you survey the field impartially, and arrive at truly objective results. This position has a show of reason; but a little reflection may convince us that it is radically unsound, and that the possession of a religious spirit is simply indispensable for the understanding of religious questions.

Every subject of study requires for its successful prosecution its own special aptitudes. This is true even of so purely intellectual and demonstrative a subject as mathematics. Still more must it be the case in questions of probability, where the judgment is called into exercise. You would not select for a teacher in physical science one who was deficient in the observing faculties, destitute of experimental resource, and prone to hasty and ill-founded generalisations. The historian must have the tact to perceive the true concatenation and dependence of events, imagination to bring vividly before his mind times far unlike his own, and the power of entering sympathetically into every kind of human

passion. Without these gifts you may have a careful inspector of documents and accumulator of dry material, but not an historian, one able to reproduce the buried ages. In matters of art, again, can he be a judge who has no æsthetic taste? He may load his mind with all the scientific facts connected with the production of musical sounds, and yet if nature has not given him a musical ear, or wakened her grand harmonies within his soul, he will be, so far as relates to music, only a learned fool. He may be versed in the chemistry of pigments, and know the number of wavelets in each tint of coloured light, but without a sense of beauty and ideal vision he will never be a painter. Industry and its offspring science are admirable servants of the human spirit; but the moment they claim an autocracy and forget their dependence on original endowments, divine gifts which no industry can impart, they remind the thoughtful observer that even on that lower plain with which they are chiefly concerned success is "not of him that willeth or of him that runneth."

Religion is subject to the same rule. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned; and from this condition there is absolutely no escape. There are, it is true, a number of questions connected with theology to which this statement is not applicable; but they belong rather to the accidental retinue of theology than to theology itself in its stricter sense. Points of textual criticism, the date and origin of books, the antiquity of man, and similar topics, are properly literary and

scientific, and not religious problems. They require, therefore, only those abilities which are adapted to the investigation of literature and natural science, and no keenness of spiritual insight can contribute to their solution. But the case is altered as soon as you come to the inner core of religion. You may study this from the outside for everlasting ages, and you will still be ignorant of it. The man who has never worshipped and loved, who has never felt the sense of sin, the peace of an assured forgiveness, and the passionate longing for an ideal righteousness, who has never trembled under the realisation of his Divine sonship, or listened with awe to a voice which seemed amid his warring impulses to speak out of the calmness of eternity, such a man, I say, cannot know these things; and if with grand airs of superior wisdom he essays to deride religion, his shafts fall harmlessly on a hideous caricature, which, like some noxious fog, has steamed up out of the slough of his own ignorance. He may be profoundly learned in regard to outward facts, and be a very paragon of impartiality, and yet he will be always dealing with false issues, and accounting for the wrong thing. Nor will all the science of the present century, or all the savagery of pristine ages, avail to cure him; for the things of consciousness never can be revealed except in consciousness.

Let us take one or two illustrations. If you are criticising, with a view to its rejection, some theological doctrine which has taken a strong hold of the human

mind, how can you possibly do so with justice, if you know nothing of the spiritual roots from which it has grown ? For anything you can tell, a more profound religious experience might entirely change your view ; and not till you have felt within yourself the emotions which the doctrine explains, or the want which it satisfies, and perceive that a different doctrine affords a better explanation and a fuller satisfaction, are you competent to pronounce. Even error often has at its heart a truth which gives it vitality and procures for it acceptance, and you will never rescue the mass of mankind from what you regard as superstition unless, while destroying the error, you save the truth. To effect this you must have not only the destructiveness of a keen and cultured intelligence, but the creative energy of the soul's higher moods and grander aspirations. Again, in the interpretation of religious books, although it is perfectly true that you must not suffer your mind to be deflected from the grammatical meaning of the text by your wishes or preconceptions, it is equally true that you are seeking to interpret, not merely a text, but a soul; and if you are out of sympathy with that soul, and have no participation in its experiences, its language will be to you an unknown tongue. It is possible to sympathise with a writer even where the intellect cannot accept his conclusions ; and it is only to sympathy that the more subtle connections, partly of thought, partly of emotion, are revealed, and only by a soul which is itself alive that the dead word

can become clothed with a still living power. These remarks apply not only to books which are pressed upon us by the men among whom we live, but also to those which represent forms of religious sentiment or philosophical thought the farthest removed from our own time and country. These used to be treated by theologians with a contempt which could only ridicule or pity the error of their form, while all that was rare and ethereal in their substance eluded this coarse and unloving observation. But it is the duty of the true interpreter to show us how these beliefs have satisfied the thirst of the human spirit, or these speculative systems were born out of the struggle of human thought; and he who can discover no beauty or pathos even in the blind gropings of error or the eager cry of superstition, is more likely to give us a caricature than an interpretation.

If these observations be just, it is obvious that we must bring to our studies not minds which gaze with blank indifference upon the various religions of the world, but rather minds which feel a profound interest in religion, and have at least the desire to become so wide in their compass and so delicate in their discrimination as to be able to penetrate the secret essence which lies at the heart of every religious manifestation. Intellectual freedom in matters of religion is not to be obtained by the massacre of our highest sentiments and emotions. This would be to substitute for the prejudice of partial knowledge the prejudice of absolute

ignorance, a prejudice which is all the more dangerous because it is tricked out in the sorry counterfeit of wisdom. Nor is freedom to be found in an attitude of revolt against received opinions ; for this again is only to exchange a conservative for a reactionary prejudice. Such an attitude may be assumed by the feeblest as well as the strongest understanding ; for every conclusion which rests upon probable evidence is exposed to objections, and nothing is easier than to dwell upon the objections till they acquire an exaggerated importance, and to depreciate the positive evidence till we become quite insensible of its real force. There are few states of mind more darkened by self-deception than this ; for, pleased by the sharpness of its criticism and its apparent superiority to the credulous vulgar, it is blinded by the conceit of cleverness and enlightenment, and is dazzled by the brilliancy of its own ostentatious candour. Genuine mental freedom is to be secured only by the supremacy of one pure and exalted sentiment, the love of truth. It was said long ago, "my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who has sent me," and I know no other rule for just judgment. This strips off the disguise of the many pretenders that usurp the name of freedom, and by removing those by-ends of self-love, which lead us astray to the right hand or to the left, enables us to follow with candid simplicity the holiest light that is vouchsafed to us. The same rule gradually corrects the bias which affects

us all, not only from the nature of our education, but from the narrowness of our original endowments ; for such a bias must be removed not by the emptiness, but by the fulness of the spirit, and the soul which walks with God, and is animated in its search by the one desire to see, so far as mortal may, the truth as it is in Him, will enter ever more deeply into the richest experiences of humanity, and approach more nearly the perfect stature of the spiritual man. Thus it is lifted above the blinding mists of self and the delusions of the world ; and though even in this upper air the finite cannot be altogether exempt from error, yet there will always be a holy reasonableness in its thought, and when it misses the form, it will still be led by the Spirit of Truth.

## P A R T II.

### RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO OTHER STUDIES.

WE have already endeavoured to vindicate the claim of theology to a place in the circle of liberal studies; we must now rapidly survey its relations to some other branches of learning. In this survey we need not attempt to construct a classified scheme of the sciences, and determine the exact position of theology in the organism of knowledge. It will be sufficient at present to say that, since it conducts us to the highest questions of ontology, and deals with the profoundest interests of mankind, it must, in the eyes of all who do not reject its title to be heard, assume a pre-eminent rank, and it presupposes for its successful prosecution a wide and exact culture. On the principal departments of that culture a few words may be said.

If we exclude philosophy, which, for reasons to be stated farther on, I prefer treating as an integral part of theological study, the basis of education for the intending theological student must still be found in the *literæ humaniores*. The study of the classical languages, with their rich and precise grammatical forms, and their

masterpieces in almost every variety of literature, furnish an unsurpassed discipline in exactness of thought and expression, and in excellence of literary structure; and the principles of textual and exegetical criticism may be learned with the greatest advantage upon this neutral territory. It is another important consideration that, though Christianity arose in Palestine, it struck its deepest roots into the soil of the Hellenic and Latin worlds, and its doctrine and ecclesiastical government were shaped by the subtlety of Greek intellect and the organising genius of Rome. In order to understand the spirit of the ancient civilisation, to enter sympathetically into its conflict with Christianity, and to distinguish the elements which it has contributed to the present faith of Christendom, we must make personal acquaintance with the literature in which its spirit is enshrined, and learn to appreciate the nobility of its thought and the splendour of its poetic creations, which have made it a power for all time. We must add the more utilitarian reflection that a knowledge of Greek and Latin as instruments of research is simply indispensable. Not only is the New Testament itself written in Greek, but far the larger part of our knowledge of Christianity for several centuries is derived from Greek and Latin writers, so that all who desire to qualify themselves for independent investigation must first acquire familiarity with these languages.

Though the first place is assigned to the classical tongues, not only on account of their special utility,

but on account of their general connection with liberal culture, there are other languages which demand the attention of one who aspires to be a complete theologian, even without straying beyond the bounds of Christendom. Hebrew, in which the Old Testament is composed, we may treat as a purely theological language. Important light is thrown, not only upon the history, but upon the ideas of the Old Testament by Assyrian and the recently disinterred Accadian, while the Egyptian hieroglyphics have increased our historical and geographical information. Chaldee and Rabbinical Hebrew are necessary for those who would trace for themselves the connection between Christianity and Judaism. Syriac contains a copious ecclesiastical literature; and Arabic, *Æthiopic*, and Armenian have preserved some interesting remains of Christian antiquity. Among modern languages French and German must have the pre-eminence, though Dutch has lately risen into importance, and other European languages are not without their contributions to theology. The Germans, however, have made this field so completely their own, and have produced such valuable works in every department of the subject, that a knowledge of German is absolutely indispensable.

A knowledge of the ancient languages presupposes some acquaintance with the peoples who spoke them; and accordingly every student of the classical tongues traces the course of Grecian and Roman history. The historical reading of the theologian must take a wider

range. As preparatory to the study of the Old Testament, he must follow the fortunes of the great Oriental monarchies, and become familiar with the characteristics of their civilisation. It is in connection with the early struggles of Christianity that he must make the largest demands upon his classical learning, so as to understand the preparation for the new religion in the diffusion of Hellenic influence and the extension of the Roman power, and to appreciate the conditions of the contest in which it was forced to engage. It is customary to deal with these subjects more or less completely in a theological course; but a general knowledge of the history must be taken for granted, and there is an advantage in surveying these subjects simply from the point of view of the historian and the statesman before attempting to penetrate their religious significance. As we track the course of Christianity through succeeding centuries we must draw upon the stores of mediæval and modern history, and in watching her missionary activity in distant lands our historical vision must take a yet wider sweep. Besides this immediate connection between general and religious history, two important benefits may accrue to the theologian from a generous historical culture. He will gain a keener insight into human nature in its sameness and its variety, and will acquire a juster estimate of its passions, its prejudices, and its aspirations; and thus he will be enabled to form a truer judgment of religious parties, and of that great struggle between the

new and the old which has drawn a line of blood and horror through the ages. He will also train his historical sense, that power of estimating the probability of events, and their mutual dependence and proportions, which constitutes the basis of sound criticism, and the want of which leads to such extravagant opinions, whether on the destructive or the conservative side. The great rules of criticism which apply to universal history must preside over the narrower domain of historical theology; and these rules may be best learned, and a discriminating tact in their application may be most advantageously cultivated, in that wider and more secular region where the problems are freest from the disturbing influences of feeling, and appeal with least entanglement to the pure historical judgment.

Naturally arising out of our historical inquiries are questions of social amelioration, which are now discussed under the name of social science. These cannot fail to be of interest to the theologian; for though they do not affect the theoretical side of his subject, they have an immediate bearing on its practical applications. It is particularly undesirable that one who undertakes to be a teacher of righteousness in a commercial community like ours should be ignorant of the principles of political economy. These are occasionally said to be antagonistic to some of the most positive teachings of Christianity. We ought to be able to judge for ourselves whether this is really so, that we may modify

any opinions which appear to be erroneous, or may be saved from injuring, by an ignorant advocacy, a cause which is really good.

The subjects on which we have hitherto touched are not only the most requisite for the future theologian, but, considered as elements of a liberal education, have one marked advantage over the physical sciences. Dealing as they do with the products of human nature, they have as their object both the inner and the outer worlds. In treating the philological aspects of language, and in translating thoughts from a dead into a living tongue, they demand thoroughness, precision, and care no less than the exact sciences ; and in concerning themselves so largely with probabilities they afford a better exercise for the judgment. But in addition to this they create a familiarity with that human nature which, whether we know it or not, is an inseparable element of all our knowledge ; they draw out its hidden processes into the light of self-consciousness, and the study of the spoken *logos* reveals that interior *logos* which is the fountain of all the rational movements of mankind. They thus prepare the way for philosophy, which, though the physicist may lawfully neglect it, can alone justify the assumptions on which he proceeds, and lift our empirical conclusions into the rank of enlightened knowledge. When we further consider their influence in maturing the tastes and enriching the mind with noble ideals, we must admit that they are unsurpassed as instruments for the cultivation of both depth

and width of faculty. Nevertheless the theologian cannot afford to overlook the natural sciences. As, according to his conception, the universe is an expression of Divine Reason, he can hardly avoid a certain enthusiasm in tracing out the processes of nature; or, if his abilities do not lead him in that direction, he must at least find himself confronted with the problem whether the world is worthy of so grand an origin, and must know what those who have most deeply studied the subject have got to say. Although questions of ontology must be decided by philosophy and not by the science of nature, nevertheless the argument of the materialist and the atheist, which at the present day assumes that science as its basis, must be considered with competent knowledge of its supposed grounds; and it will be impossible to draw a just line between the wisdom and prejudice of scientific men, to distinguish their *idola* from their real knowledge, unless we are first familiar both with the methods and with the results of their studies. In particular directions the modern theory of evolution, which meets with growing acceptance, must seriously modify some of the older forms of theology, and I need hardly remind you that astronomy and geology have abolished the Hebrew firmament, the motionless earth, and the recent date and summary process of creation, and that these facts, combined with others of a different description, must profoundly affect our view of the nature of revelation and inspiration, and of the character of the Bible. These examples may convince

us that a general knowledge of natural science is indispensable to the theologian; and I may add that in the present age, which is so given over to mere physical research on the one hand, and to blind acquiescence in ecclesiastical authority on the other, he who would mediate between the rival parties, and bring the contrasted elements of our nature into harmonious union, must be prepared by his mental resources to do equal justice to both sides, and must be familiar with the facts and laws of the phenomenal realm while he endeavours to import into it the eternal realities of the spiritual sphere.

The foregoing remarks may show you that the various subjects of your arts course have not been selected without deliberation, and that the several departments of your study have all a more or less direct bearing upon your future career. But there is another class of subjects which has hardly received sufficient recognition in collegiate discipline, but to which the theologian cannot be indifferent. We possess not only intellectual but æsthetic faculties; and not only ought our sense of beauty to be cultivated, but we ought to know something of the history and the principles of art. The religious spirit expresses itself not only through moral rules and doctrinal formulæ, but in artistic creations and elaborate ceremonial. The simple and untutored outpouring of devotion gradually embodies itself in a solemn liturgy, and the liturgy seeks the aid of architecture, music,

painting, and sculpture, and filling them with the vivid breath of religious emotion shapes them to its own lofty ends. We must understand these things through the artistic spirit in ourselves, and learn to apprehend a truth which, disdaining the austere confinement of logical speech, flings itself forth in the free play of imagination, and looks at us through the subtle and changeful forms of beauty. Nor let us forget that beauty and imagination manifest themselves in language as well as in shape and colour and music, and now march in the majestic strains of Milton, now peer like an ethereal and impalpable spirit through the lyrics of Shelley, and again leave the impress of their wisdom and purity and insight in the serious lines of Wordsworth. Like the true theologian, the poet lives in an ideal world; and if you would not lose your power of flight amid the arid wastes of a theology which misses realities in its devotion to forms, you will often refresh your minds by drinking at the fountains of poetry, and strengthen the wings of holy imagination by soaring into that upper region from which the things of earth are seen in a halo of heavenly light.

In conclusion let me remind you that your collegiate pursuits can only introduce you to the temple of knowledge, and that you ought not, as though your general education were now complete, altogether to abandon studies for which your faculty is just becoming strong and your judgment clear. In our own curriculum some provision is made for maintaining your proficiency in

the Greek and Latin languages, and for extending your acquaintance with classical as well as patristic literature; but most of the other subjects on which I have touched must be left to your independent exertions. It is a frequent complaint that the special learning of our College days glides imperceptibly from the mind, and amid the active duties of the ministry you will find it difficult to secure time for the pursuits of the scholar. You may want not only time, but encouragement; for the present age seems to have more faith in bodily exercise than in mental quality. But make it yours to teach the age a more excellent way, and to show that the only real and permanent good springs from the inner forces of the soul. Even a small amount of time religiously devoted to the acquisition of knowledge will suffice to preserve and extend your highest attainments, and only by thus faithfully following the lofty ideal of the Christian scholar, as the servant and the herald of truth, can you hope to win back to your profession the respect of cultivated men, and link religion once more to the intelligence of mankind.

## PART III.

### SYNOPTICAL VIEW OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THEOLOGY.

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE purpose of that portion of our subject on which we are now entering is to bring together under a single view the several departments of theological study, so that you may see its extent, together with the grouping, the mutual relations, and the general character of the various branches into which it is divided. This is a topic which has received a large share of attention in Germany under the name of "Theologische Encyklopädie," or "Encyklopädie der Theologie," or "der theologischen Wissenschaften." The literature of the subject, with an account of its gradual development into its present shape, will be found in the two works which it will be sufficient to recommend here. The "Encyklopädie und Methodologie der theologischen Wissenschaften," of Dr. K. R. Hagenbach, theological Professor in Basel, was first published at Leipzig in 1833, and its solid value and usefulness are attested by the fact that it

reached its ninth edition in 1874, while a tenth, revised by Professor Kautzsch, was issued in 1880.<sup>1</sup> In this work the purely theoretical aspects of theology are perhaps too much subordinated to its practical aims, and its arrangement does not appear to me to be logically perfect; but it contains a large amount of material which the student will find of great service, and the bibliography under each section is, at least as regards German books, remarkably full. The foreign literature, though not altogether excluded, presents a meagre appearance, and the English reader will find it of little or no value as a guide to the theology of his own country. A sketch is given of the "history and literature of Theological Encyclopædia," in an appendix to the first part, after section 33. The other work referred to above is "Theologik oder Encyklopädie der Theologie," by I. F. Räbiger, Professor of Evangelical Theology in the University of Breslau, published at Leipzig in 1880. Räbiger prefers the name "Theologik" because it is his purpose not merely to exhibit a formal scheme of theological studies, but to take up into his scheme the essential contents of theology, and thus furnish, as he says, "not only a formal, but at the same time a material sketch of theological science."<sup>2</sup> If this plan has the disadvantage of making the book to some extent the manifesto of a particular school, it greatly

<sup>1</sup> My occasional references are to the edition of 1869, which was beside me as I wrote; but there will be no difficulty in finding any required passage in a different edition.

<sup>2</sup> Preface, p. iv.

adds to its interest; and the author's clear and flowing style and continuous text impart to his work an attractiveness to which Hagenbach's can lay no claim. His views are avowedly evangelical; but some of his critical conclusions would make English evangelicals shudder. He is broad in his sympathies, can distinguish between the letter and the spirit, and has no fear of the most rigorous scientific method. In one respect his book is less useful than Hagenbach's; he has secured the necessary space for his new material by contracting the bibliographical portion, and naming only the most important works under each head. The history of his own subject, however, is particularly full and instructive, and accompanied by appropriate criticisms of the several writers.<sup>1</sup> It does not suit our immediate plan to follow him into this interesting field; but it will be advantageous to mention two or three of the principal modes which have been adopted for the distribution of theological material.

Among the Catholics we may notice Staudenmaier, whose "Encyklopädie der theologischen Wissenschaften als System der gesammten Theologie" appeared at Mainz in 1834.<sup>2</sup> He defined theology as "the consciousness of God elevated into a science,"<sup>3</sup> or more briefly as "the science of religion." Christian theology

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 2-91.

<sup>2</sup> 2d ed., 1st vol., in 1840. See Räbiger, p. 89 sq.

<sup>3</sup> For want of a better term I shall use "science" as equivalent to the German *Wissenschaft*. The latter covers the whole domain of reflective and methodical study.

is "the science of our collective religious consciousness, as it is conditioned and shaped historically through the revelation in Christ," or in fewer words, "the science of Christian faith." It involves, therefore, both a speculative and an historical element, and through its connection with the Church is concerned also with practical questions. Hence arise its three principal divisions. Speculative Theology begins with a theory of religion and revelation, and so leads to the Christian revelation and its source in tradition and Scripture. The use of Scripture necessitates the introduction of Exegetical Theology, which thus appears as a subordinate branch of the Speculative. The treatment of sources is naturally followed by Dogmatics and Ethics. Ethics prepares the way for the second main division, Practical Theology, which deals with the doctrine of ecclesiastical government and of church services. And lastly, Historical Theology embraces the history of dogmas, an account of the Symbols or Creeds of the Church, Archæology and Ecclesiastical History. It is evident that we have here a careful attempt to lay out the various topics of theology in a systematic and exhaustive arrangement. The most striking objection to it is the inclusion of Exegetical under Speculative Theology, which it may indeed assist, but of which it is not naturally a part.

Schleiermacher takes so pre-eminent a place among the Protestant theologians of the present century that we must refer to his "Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums zum Behuf einleitender Vorlesungen

entworfen," published at Berlin 1811.<sup>1</sup> He confines his attention to Christian theology, which he regards as a positive science, whose parts are connected into a whole by their reference to Christianity, and which as such has to solve a practical problem. It is not necessary for Christian faith and piety, and therefore has regard only to the purposes of the ministry. Accordingly it comprises those branches of knowledge and rules of practice without which a consistent ecclesiastical government is not possible. This practical aim dominates Schleiermacher's entire system, and from it are derived the three grand divisions of theology. The first requirement is an assurance that the existence of the Church can be shown to be necessary for the development of the human mind. This is the business of religious and ethical philosophy, which must ascertain and estimate the essential idea of Christianity and of the Church. Hence Philosophical Theology occupies the foremost place. Out of the active aims of the ministry arises Practical Theology; and as this presupposes a knowledge of the historical conditions of the Church, it must be content with the third place, leaving the second to Historical Theology. The object of Philosophical Theology is to ascertain the essential idea of Christianity, and establish the truth of the mode of faith adopted by the Church, and to exclude and refute whatever deviates from this. Thus are given the two

<sup>1</sup> 2d ed. 1830. A translation by William Farrer, LL.B., was published by Clark of Edinburgh in 1850.

subdivisions, *Apologetics* and *Polemics*, each involving general and particular, or Christian and Protestant treatment. In regard to *Historical Theology* the ministry demands first of all a knowledge of the present moment, out of which the future has to be unfolded; and the present can be understood only from the historical course of the past and the earliest conditions of the Christian life. Hence, following the chronological order, we obtain, as subordinate branches, *Exegetical Theology*, *Ecclesiastical History*, and the historical knowledge of the present condition of Christianity, under the two heads of *Dogmatics* and what the Germans term *Statistik*, an account of the present circumstances of the Church. Under *Practical Theology* Schleiermacher limits himself to a theory of administration for the German Evangelical Church, and distributes his subject into two sections, the principles of church service, and the principles of ecclesiastical government. In this scheme Schleiermacher has allowed himself to be ruled too exclusively by the practical interests of the Church, and thereby assigns to theology a lower position than it is entitled to occupy. Regarded as a science it carries its own interest with it, and asks to be studied for its own sake, and not merely with a view to the administration of a Church. The wrong determination of the object of theology injuriously affects the distribution of its topics. *Apologetics* and *Polemics* may be very necessary to the professional guardians of the Church's faith, and may therefore take the leading place

for practical purposes; but it is conceded by Schleiermacher himself that this is not the scientific order, for he says that Philosophical Theology presupposes a knowledge of the Historical. If, however, theology is to vindicate its place as a science, it must be moved by the simple desire to bring forth its contents into the light of reflective thought, and arrange them in their logical order. Räbiger further complains that Schleiermacher makes theology too dependent on philosophy, and thus impresses upon it throughout the stamp of subjectivity. With this criticism I cannot so easily concur; and we shall have to consider farther on whether it is possible for theology to cut itself adrift from philosophy, and maintain that position of absolute independence which Räbiger and others demand.<sup>1</sup>

We must take a briefer view of two or three of the more recent systems. In 1843 A. F. L. Pelt published his "Theologische Encyklopädie als System im Zusammenhange mit der Geschichte der theologischen Wissenschaft und ihrer einzelnen Zweige entwickelt." The plan adopted in this work is followed substantially, though not without modifications, in his later article in Herzog's "Real-Encyklopädie,"<sup>2</sup> which I here follow. He, like Schleiermacher, limits theology to the exposition of the Christian religion, and defines it as "the Church's scientific self-consciousness of its unfolding through the Holy Spirit." Hence its first problem is to study the Church

<sup>1</sup> See Räbiger's criticisms, pp. 59-62.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. xv. 1862, pp. 748-752.

historically in its origin, development, and present condition. Thus Historical Theology stands first, with its three grand divisions—Biblical Theology in its most extended sense, Ecclesiastical History, and Statistics—each with their appropriate subdivisions. The study of Statistics, in dealing with the doctrinal and ethical characteristics of the various sects, prepares the way for Systematic Theology, which is distributed into three parts, treating respectively of the fundamental principles of Christianity (Grundlehre or Fundamentaltheologie), of its dogmatical and ethical contents (thetische Theologie), and of the philosophy of Christianity. Under this last head Christianity is exhibited not only as the highest manifestation of religion, but as the full realisation of the kingdom of God upon earth, which, with its developing self-consciousness, successively unfolds itself up to its final completion. This self-development of the Church is, in other words, ecclesiastical practice ; and we thus reach our third main division, Practical Theology. Here also we have three principal subdivisions. The first deals with fundamental principles, concluding with the theory of ecclesiastical organisation. As an organisation implies rule and subordination, the second part takes up the subject of canon law and ecclesiastical government. And lastly, the third part gives the theory of the various forms of activity by which the Church is maintained or extended : the order of Divine service, or Liturgics ; preaching, or Homiletics ; the instruction of the young, or Catechetics ; missions,

or Halieutics ; and finally, the means of securing competent ecclesiastical learning, theological seminaries, the theological Faculty at Universities, and so forth.

Hagenbach and Räbiger, while differing from one another in some of their subdivisions, concur in separating Biblical and Historical Theology, and recognising four grand divisions of their subject—exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical.

These examples may suffice to give you some insight into the general purpose of *Theologische Encyklopädie*, and show you by their variety the difficulty of framing an altogether satisfactory classification. In the scheme which is here presented I propose to adopt six great divisions :—I. Philosophy ; II. Comparative Religion ; III. Biblical Theology ; IV. Ecclesiastical History ; V. Systematic Theology ; VI. Practical Theology. The reasons for this distribution will be given as we take up the several topics one by one ; and I will only observe at present that the second, third, and fourth heads might legitimately be classed together under the title of Historical Theology, but they are so distinct from one another and of such prime importance, while around the second and still more the third head cluster so many associations and interests which are not strictly historical, that it seems inappropriate to reduce them to the rank of subdivisions, and thus place them in a lower position than we assign to our philosophical and doctrinal studies. We may now proceed to consider the several subjects in their order.

## SECTION I.

*Philosophy.*

It is customary to treat philosophy, not as a part of theology, but as one of the most important preliminary studies. In adopting it into the theological scheme it is by no means my intention to call in question its independent rights, or to maintain that in pursuing it one is necessarily joining the ranks of the theologians. It does not depreciate or subordinate it, but rather elevates it and gives it a leading position, to take it out of the category of mere preparatory discipline and make it an indispensable part of the theologian's equipment. The philosopher (like the historian who follows the fortunes of the Church from a mere humanitarian interest) need not be a theologian, but the theologian is bound to explore the deepest questions in philosophy. The philosopher may interest himself in the great problems of the universe without entering the domain of religion ; and as a philosopher he ought to examine these things with a purely speculative interest, unbiassed by the dicta of ecclesiastics. But the theologian cannot on his side claim an equal independence. He cannot move a step without first reckoning with philosophy, hearing what it has to say, and understanding the grounds of its decisions ; and therefore his only resource is to incorporate it and give it the foremost

place among his own studies. This is the position which we have now to make good.

The importance of philosophy as a *preparation* for theology can hardly be disputed. It is recognised not only by German rationalists, but by the highest authority in the Catholic Church. In his Encyclical Letter "On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy in Catholic Universities, according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor," Pope Leo XIII., among other recommendations, speaks of the "use of philosophy, both perpetual and manifold, in order that sacred theology may assume and put on the nature, habit, and character of true science;"<sup>1</sup> and Cardinal Manning says, "the science of theology presupposes a sound philosophy as its preamble and foundation."<sup>2</sup> The latter claim is made for philosophy on the ground that it infallibly establishes the truths of natural religion, and we might therefore assume that it is accepted as a constituent part of theology; but this term is reserved for the supernatural teaching of the Church, so that the light of nature and the light of faith may be clearly distinguished from one another, though they both "come from one and the same Fountain, the Father of Lights."<sup>3</sup> The two statements, of the Pope and the Cardinal, suggest the two functions which philosophy fulfils in theological study. Regarded as merely preparatory, it

<sup>1</sup> P. 10 of the English translation by Dr. Rawes.

<sup>2</sup> P. xiii. of the Preface to the same. The Encyclical is dated August 4, 1879.

<sup>3</sup> P. x.

trains the faculty of methodical and exact thought and the power of introspection, thus enabling us not only to arrange our materials into a harmonious system, consistent with itself and with other departments of knowledge, but to observe accurately and interpret truly those inner experiences which so deeply colour our theological conclusions. But philosophy does much more than this. It requires some settled convictions in regard to its own proper subjects, metaphysics and ontology, and thus enters, with either affirmation or denial, the very forecourt of theology itself. If it can prove that the mind is no permanent entity, but only beads of consciousness succeeding one another in obedience to physiological law, that conscience has no Divine authority, that men are not responsible for their voluntary actions, and that there is either no God, or, if there be, we have no ground for believing in him, then theology as an exposition of permanent reality ceases to exist, and is degraded into a mere history of human delusions. Theology, therefore, must wait upon philosophy for the establishment of its fundamental propositions; and though, as natural science does not wait for the permission of philosophy before assuming the existence of matter and force, so theology might assume the reality of the soul and God, still it is unable to proceed with any satisfaction so long as it is haunted by unanswered doubts, and the religious instincts have not been brought into harmony with the speculative reason. On this ground, then, I conceive that philosophy and

theology are related to one another, not as touching, but as intersecting circles, and that the first step in theology is to establish on a philosophical basis the reality of its objects.

To this conclusion two forms of objection may be raised. It may be said that the possession of an authoritative revelation, whether that revelation be supposed to reside ultimately in the Church or in the Bible, saves us from the uncertainties of speculation, and renders philosophical research unnecessary. This might be true in regard to a variety of questions ; but in regard to those which are fundamental it cannot be true. Before you can accept an authoritative revelation you must be convinced that there is a God from whom it may have come, and on whose authority it may rest. A revelation can have no authority unless it be Divine, and therefore you cannot prove the reality of the Divine by the authority of the revelation. If you appeal to miracles, a miracle has no meaning except as the expression of an admitted Divine power. In the absence of belief in God we could only treat a miracle, if it occurred, as an inexplicable *lusus naturae*, or as the result of some hitherto undiscovered law ; and I doubt whether in any instance the evidence for miracles has convinced of the truth of theism one who has been unmoved alike by the order of the universe, the testimony of conscience, and the intellectual demand for a primal cause. It is in vain, therefore, that you try to escape from the restless questionings of philosophy into the

quiet and sure retreats of revelation. You must first demonstrate the possibility and the reality of revelation, and you can do this only by philosophical reasoning, which goes to the very roots of theological knowledge.

Another plea may be advanced by those who do not believe in a dogmatic revelation, but nevertheless accept the Christian religion as the basis of their theology. It may be urged that the Christian consciousness—that is to say, the form of the religious spirit which has been developed under the influence of Christianity—contains certain implicit truths; and as this spirit carries its own guarantee to every one who is animated by it, it is the province of theology simply to draw forth and formulate these truths. Now none could be farther than myself from denying that the witness of the Spirit is for each man a deep and valid ground for religious conviction, and that a philosophy which dissolved this witness into the empty vapours of an ignorant fancy would violate the unity of our nature, and rend our faculties into civil conflict. For the practical purposes of life this inward testimony is sufficient, and the devout Christian may accept the disclosures of faith as containing their own authentication. But theology demands something more than this, and cannot be content to unfold the implicit contents of the religious element in man till it has settled whether and to what extent that element may be trusted; and to do this is the business of philosophy. When this first step is neglected, and theology is con-

fined to the interpretation of the Christian consciousness, it seems to lack a rational basis, and it is not till we reach the subordinate subject of Apologetics that we cease to ask whether we are dealing with realities or with dreams.

For the above reasons it appears to me that the fundamental truths of theology must be philosophically established before we can advance with any satisfaction to its ulterior problems.

The philosophical course is divided into three sections, dealing respectively with Mental, Ethical, and Religious Philosophy.

1. *Mental Philosophy.*—Mental Philosophy has an interest for us in this connection only so far as it is devoted to problems which have a more or less direct bearing on theology. The most important of these, as determining whether theology be possible at all, relates to the conditions of belief and the sphere of knowledge. Men have been in the habit of supposing that they not only apprehend a phenomenal world through the senses, but that by an intellectual intuition they transcend this world and discover an abiding ground, of which it is merely the varying expression. The validity of this judgment has been sharply questioned in our own day, and the position is maintained that we know nothing but phenomena. The denial does not, indeed, extend to the possible existence of something behind phenomena, but only to the adequacy of our faculties either

to reach or to interpret it. This view may assume either of two forms. It may be atheistic, and declare that, if there be a God, his very existence is absolutely unknown; or it may be agnostic, and maintain that, though there is an ultimate ground for phenomena, there is nothing which justifies a predication respecting the essence or character of this unknown Supreme. It is, therefore, in both its forms, destructive of religion, though it abstains from negative dogmatism; for religion involves essentially a recognised spiritual relation between us and God. This serious question must be settled, not by the off-hand assumptions either of the theologian, who is accustomed to breathe the rarefied atmosphere of ontological conceptions, or of the man of science, whose business it is to rest in the information of the senses and investigate the relations of phenomena, but by a patient and thorough examination of the laws of thought and of the sources of knowledge. If we arrive at the conclusion that we are inexorably confined within the limits of the experience afforded by sensation, we must turn away from the path on which we have entered, and leave it to be trodden by somnambulists and dreamers. But if we come to believe, no longer through native instinct, but by a judgment of reflective thought, that our supersensible ideas are at least as trustworthy a guarantee of objective reality as those derived from the senses, and that indeed they are the prior conditions of all experiential knowledge, we shall then be prepared to go confidently on our way,

and to use the result which we have reached as a starting-point for further inquiry.

Some other questions are less vital, but, though not involving the existence of theology, seriously affect the character of its doctrines. In regard to the nature of the mind itself, we have to consider whether it is material or spiritual ; a mere function of the brain or a power which uses the brain as its organ of phenomenal manifestation ; a series of states of consciousness, tossed up like spray from the ceaseless undulations of the physical realm, or an abiding entity which stands over against the drift of nature with permanent faculties and laws of its own, and which may therefore reasonably hope to survive the dissolution of the material frame. We have also to examine the problem of the will. Have we causal power of our own, and do we exercise a determining control over our voluntary actions, or are our movements mere links in the endless chain of natural sequence ? The logical result of the latter position, and of the philosophy which it represents, has been formulated by high scientific authority in the doctrine that man is an automaton ; that is, that his bodily activity, though it should be the writing of an *Iliad* or a *Hamlet*, proceeds by inevitable physical law, and is in no way affected by the superfluous consciousness which is either its result or, at most, its independent, though parallel, accompaniment. It may be a question whether this doctrine, opposed as it seems to be to the most elementary facts of consciousness, is not a *reductio*

*ad absurdum* of the whole method of thought of which it is the logical outcome, and whether it is not the result of a merely scientific, as distinguished from a genuinely philosophical, view of the universe. At all events it is not a mark of either wisdom or liberality to sneer at the old belief in human freedom and responsibility as an idle and exploded superstition. We are all in danger of adopting false principles, and assigning to them an axiomatic force, till the results which are successively drawn from them, and are paraded as the last and highest word of philosophy, become so grotesque that the common sense of mankind revolts against them. The problem of the will must be solved, not by dragging the postulates of physical science into the mental sphere, but by judiciously consulting and interpreting the oracles of consciousness. If we can find there no free preferential power, and no mental control over our bodily activity, we must then contentedly surrender everything to the domain of physical law. But if we are convinced that personal spiritual agency is real, then we must accept the fact, though we are thus introduced to a whole empire of being which our physical researches can never touch; and through biology and mental physiology, where the two realms intermingle, we must co-ordinate as best we may this higher knowledge with our natural science.

The discussion of the will naturally suggests the inquiry whether there is any rule of right and wrong by which we ought to direct our actions, and for the

due observance of which we are justly responsible. Although this inquiry still involves psychological considerations, yet it carries us beyond the enclosure of our own minds, and demands an examination not only of the moral sentiments but of the objects towards whom, and the conditions under which, our duties must be fulfilled. It thus transports us beyond the domain of purely mental philosophy, and assumes for itself a distinct department, that of Ethics.

2. *Ethical Philosophy* has to discuss the basis and character of human duty. In discharging this task, and attempting to interpret the inner meaning of conscience, it encounters a problem of the profoundest interest to the theologian. Conscience seems to bring us into the presence of eternal relations, to speak with a voice of transcendent authority, and to warn us that we shall be held responsible for our conduct. For these facts various explanations have been proposed which assign to them a merely earthly origin, and ascribe the ideal glory which surrounds them to the defective vision of the mind itself. It is the business of Ethical Philosophy to test these interpretations, and see whether they take all the facts into account. If it is satisfied with any of them, then theology must be content to relinquish one of its supports. But if it is convinced that they fail to take all the facts into account, that moral goodness belongs to the region of eternal realities, that the authority of conscience is really supra-mun-

dane, and that the sense of responsibility cannot be legitimately got rid of, then we must carry the results thus obtained into our third department of philosophical study, in order to bring them into relation with a larger field of thought, and give them a more complete interpretation.

3. *Religious Philosophy* has to inquire into the being, attributes, and providence of God, and the doctrine of a future life. In seeking to prove the existence of God it relies upon intuitions which we have already discovered in our previous investigations. From the intellectual domain it borrows the causal intuition, and shows how the existence of a phenomenal world presupposes the reality of an eternal Will, of whose activity it is the expression. As Will is not a blind force, but a power consciously working towards pre-determined ends, we are led on to the question of design in the structure of the universe, and have to weigh the objections which are urged against the teleological view, and examine the hypotheses which endeavour to explain the universe without resorting to a Divine purpose. From Ethics we borrow the intuition of duty, with the sense of transcendent authority which we have found involved in that intuition; and hence we come to recognise the presence of a holy Will in communion with the human conscience.

Those who believe (as I do) that they can distinguish the spiritual from the ethical consciousness allege

yet another source of evidence, the religious element in man, which turns towards God as its object and justification. This might fairly be discussed in the present place, but for two reasons it seems better to postpone it. Since it affects the whole range of religious experience, colouring our thought upon several important subjects besides the doctrine of the existence of God, bearing especially on what may be called religious anthropology, it will be more fitly considered as preliminary to a systematic course of Doctrinal Theology. Again, it is evident that the religious consciousness assumes different forms in different persons and communities, and that it has grown with the progress of the human mind, so that it is richer and more complex now than in primitive ages. We shall therefore be better able to understand it, to trace its universal characters, and to distinguish its legitimate outgrowths from parasitic accretions, when we have surveyed its historical manifestations, and determined its principal lines of development and varieties of form. The great historical departments of theology, therefore, naturally engage our attention next; and having now satisfied ourselves that religion has a Real Object, we shall pursue our way, not as men groping contemptuously amid the shadows of human weakness and delusion, but as those who see a light shining in darkness, and in the long spiritual struggle of savage and Greek, Hebrew and Christian, recognise a providential order, and the grand march of humanity towards the highest truth.

## SECTION II.

*Comparative Religion.*

The study of Comparative Religion has in recent times received an amount of attention which it never before enjoyed, and which has rendered it necessary to transform it from a mere introductory chapter of Ecclesiastical History into a distinct and independent branch of theological research. This change is due partly to our increased ethnological knowledge, especially our growing acquaintance with the thoughts and practices of savage tribes; partly to the impulse received from comparative philology, which has led to the discovery of such interesting relations among the mythologies of different peoples; partly to the improved facilities of access to the sources of the great Oriental religions; but chiefly, perhaps, to that largeness of religious view which is able to find members of the family of God beyond the circle of our own particular creed. It was formerly supposed by Christian writers that Christianity stood in no relation towards other modes of belief except the relation of the one Divine and true to the many human and false, and alien religions were referred to in order to exhibit the hopeless folly and imbecility of the human mind when unilluminined by the rays of a supernatural revelation. A more sympathetic study has produced a juster estimate, and we have learned to recognise the fact that, on the one hand,

Christianity, whatever it may be in its ideal aspects, has not in its historical manifestation escaped the disfigurement of many an error and superstition ; and, on the other hand, the religions which alone could pretend to rival it contain, amid their misconceptions, some grand, if imperfect, truths, and represent the upward rather than the downward tendency of mankind. In this way the Christian doctrine of a universal Father, who never leaves himself without a witness, is passing at last into the accepted creed of Christendom, and we begin to perceive that the Divine Spirit sinks down into human conditions, and lies hidden like leaven in the gross mass of human ignorance ; and conversely, that the earthen vessels, which we thought so common and repulsive, enclose a Divine treasure. We must not be surprised if this alteration, which really amounts to a revolution in opinion, sometimes assumes a reactionary character, and leads to an unsympathetic and therefore unjust criticism of the Hebrew and Christian religions, and an undue exaltation of every scrap of wisdom that may be gathered from other sources. But we must guard ourselves against this reaction, and study all religions alike with impartiality, not the impartiality of indifference or conscious superiority, but of that broad human love which finds brothers everywhere, which takes a living interest in the vast drama of history, and not only thrills responsive to every lofty sentiment, but feels the pathos of error and sin.

Comparative Religion comes appropriately between

our philosophical and our more exclusively historical studies ; for its object is to reach philosophical results through an historical method. It is not content with the purely historical task of describing the outward form, the creed and ritual, of the several religions, and tracing the circumstances of their origin, and their chronological and local changes, but it seeks to gain through the information thus acquired a fuller comprehension of that common nature, both in its strength and its weakness, of which the historical facts are the expression. If we endeavour to analyse this purpose, we may say that it attempts in the first place to discover the principle of unity, whether of thought or of feeling, which underlies the various religions, and makes it proper to treat them together as varieties of religion ; in other words, it seeks to determine the ultimate and permanent form of the religious element, from which, as their common root, the numerous branches have sprung into their divergent growth ; or, if they should appear to have had various origins, to portray the later principle of resemblance which brings them under a common designation. Secondly, their divergence must itself be explained and tracked up to its original source in the different tendencies of speculative thought ; and again, the connection of the latter with the conditions of nationality and culture must not be left out of consideration. Thirdly, it will be observed that religions do not remain in their primitive form, but in the progress of time are subject to both losses and additions ;

while some, like the Greek and Roman, have run their course, and been vanquished by a more powerful rival. Hence it is necessary to look for the laws of religious development and decay, and estimate the influence, not only of the constantly increasing knowledge of outward things, but still more of the growing consciousness of something higher than the traditional creed can satisfy ; or, on the contrary, of the gradual lapse into ignorance and barbarism, and of the craving for a more sensuous worship, which springs from the inability of inferior minds to stand on the spiritual heights of the pristine faith. And in the fourth place, as the result of these inquiries, and in preparation for our further studies, it ought to be possible to disengage Christianity in its distinctive features, determine its philosophical position, and exhibit it as the most complete expression of the religious sentiment.

For the purposes of exposition we must assume that these results have been already to some extent attained, and adopt such a classification of religions as will bring clearly into view the development of the religious sentiment from its lowest into its highest forms. It is, of course, quite possible to group religions together in accordance with their external characteristics, or under the guidance of their national or historical connections, or even in agreement with the fundamental division of languages. An arrangement founded upon such considerations cannot be altogether neglected, for the lines of mental resemblance will naturally tend to coincide

with national and linguistic affinities, and the same interior causes will produce similar characteristics ; and, at least in the subdivisions of the subject, it will be sometimes convenient to follow the historical and ethnological connections. In order to obtain, however, a philosophical classification we must start from the inward principles which govern the movements of thought. Now we have already seen that our knowledge of the Divine is derived from two great sources, nature and man ; and these furnish our first main division of religions.

Man's attention is directed first upon the objects which strike the eye and ear, and affect him with pleasurable or painful emotions ; and he will therefore catch his first glimpses of the Divine in the familiar objects around him, in their mysterious movements, their beneficent or destructive activity, and their sublime and incomprehensible magnitude. Hence the earlier and so-called heathen religions are religions of nature, and are distinguished by one prevailing characteristic ; they conceive God or the gods as immanent in the universe. So long as there is no science the mind may discover its gods in the spirits of ancestors who are supposed to haunt and animate their ancient scenes, or in other spirits whom the imagination locates in common and inert objects, where surprise or fear has detected a magical power. Thus we are introduced to the religions of Animism and Fetichism. When science has begun to observe and classify the forces of nature,

these latter are elevated into so many separate gods, and the various forms of Polytheism arise ; and when, with the progress of intelligence, the conceptions of unity and order emerge out of the chaos of phenomena, some approach is made to Monotheism by the creation of a hierarchy of gods, with one supreme ruler at their head. When philosophical reflection awakens, and directs its energies upon this type of faith, the idea of an eternal nature-spirit is evolved, and the result is Pantheism.<sup>1</sup>

Man may, however, be led by the disposing Will

<sup>1</sup> The above account of the origin of polytheism, though it appears to me both *a priori* probable and historically justified, may not be accepted by every one. It is conceivable that it may have arisen from a union of tribes, each of which in its previous independence was monotheistic. I think, however, that no genuine monotheism could admit of this amalgamation ; for a tribe which had once recognised in its god the universal cause would hardly have consented to lower him into the ruler of a single department of nature. On the other hand, a tribe which, though worshipping only one god of its own, believed that other tribes had their particular gods, would be already essentially polytheistic ; and it seems probable that in this case the divinity of each would be a nature-god, selected in accordance with local surroundings—highlanders, for instance, venerating a god of the mountains, dwellers by the sea a marine deity, and so on. When races of this sort amalgamated, they would naturally adopt one another's gods, and so change their henotheism into polytheism. But this process is after all essentially the same as that indicated in the text. The blending of the gods of different polytheistic nations in a hospitable pantheon is, of course, historically known, and ought to be considered as at least one of the modifying influences of polytheism. There is also another cause for the multiplication of gods which we ought not to overlook, namely, the tendency in ancient thought to personify the Divine attributes. It does not, however, belong to our present purpose to discuss the various theories which, in the absence of direct evidence, may reasonably be adopted, but only to indicate the general basis on which a classification of religions should be founded.

that guides him to seek the Divine within himself, and to become conscious of something more awful than he sees in the fierce brightness of the sun, or hears in the deep-voiced thunder. It is here that he recognises a Being who is always the same, who is with him wherever he goes, and who speaks to him from a realm which is above and independent of nature. Religions of which this is the source, therefore, are distinguished by the doctrine of the transcendence and unity of God, and are properly monotheistic in distinction from both Polytheism and Pantheism. Among these religions themselves there is room for an important subdivision. We may seek for God in either the conscience or the spirit. If the former claim the leading place, we shall have a legal religion, in which God is chiefly recognised as holy, and his will is incorporated in an authoritative Law. Of this form of religion Judaism is of course the principal representative. But this is not yet the highest stage; for its legalism cannot satisfy the profoundest wants of the soul, and in spite of the extended outlook and piercing insight of some of its prophets it has remained the religion of a single people. When the witness of the spirit is admitted along with that of conscience, God is known as not only holy but loving, not only the exactor of righteousness, but the bestower of grace; and the Law passes from a mere rule of duty into a living inspiration. We thus arrive at a purely spiritual religion, which addresses its universal conceptions to man as man.

In recognising God as the Father of spirits and the Lord of nature it loses none of the truths which less developed religions had attempted to express. It still sees the Divine indwelling in nature ; it still hears the Divine voice in conscience ; while in the immortal communion of a son with the Father it has reached the ultimate goal of religious development. This is the position which we assign to Christianity ; and having determined its place as the highest and most catholic expression of religion, we proceed in the following sections to investigate it more closely, and to consider it in its origin and development.

### SECTION III.

#### *Biblical Theology.*

For this department of our study I prefer the more comprehensive name of Biblical to that of Exegetical Theology, which is adopted not only by Hagenbach, but by Räbiger, who takes, I think, a juster view of the object and compass of the inquiry which he thus designates. Hagenbach quite correctly limits Exegetical Theology to whatever refers to the exposition of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and therefore makes it include only exegesis itself and those allied studies which prepare us for the work of interpretation, while he relegates to the department of Historical Theology the history of Israel, the lives of Christ

and the Apostles, and the formal statement of Biblical doctrine. To this arrangement it may be fairly objected that exegesis is not an end in itself, but only the means whereby certain results are obtained, and therefore cannot justly claim an independent division of theology, but must be content with the humbler rank of a subsidiary discipline. In accordance with what was said at the close of the last section, our present object is to obtain an exact knowledge of primitive Christianity, to trace its historical genesis, to catch and fix the first products of its inspiration, and so determine its real genius, to watch its first struggles with the world, to bring into systematic arrangement the earliest expressions of its doctrine, and mark the first divergent tendencies of its thought. This object ought to dominate the whole of our present section, and prescribe the necessary subdivisions ; for we are now provided with a subject which is worthy of study for its own sake, and has an importance at least as high and independent as that which belongs to our other principal departments. It will be observed, moreover, that it arises naturally out of the preceding section, and as naturally leads us to consider in the following section the historical development of the Christian faith. The name Biblical Theology may not appear to suggest at once the purpose which we have in view ; but it is not inappropriate, for the Bible is the source from which our knowledge must be mainly drawn, and it will be found that every subdivision is concerned with some branch of Biblical

study. We must be careful, however, not to confound it with one of its own subordinate sections which is engaged in the systematic statement of Biblical doctrine, and which is sometimes spoken of as Biblical Theology. We may distinguish the less comprehensive inquiry by calling it the Theology of the Bible, or of the Old and New Testaments.

Of the two grand portions which together constitute the Christian Bible the New Testament, of course, most nearly concerns us. Whatever dogmatic view may be taken of its origin and authority, it cannot be denied that it brings us into the closest contact with the foundations of Christianity, is the ultimate medium through which the spirit of Christ is revealed, and exhibits the characteristic life and thought of his disciples in their young purity and fervour. It is true that Christianity is older than the New Testament, and that therefore it is not one of those religions which rest in the last resort upon a written code. The great Teacher himself committed no dogmas or ordinances to parchment, but delivered his spirit to the receptive hearts of men; and his Gospel was propagated orally, until, through the growing extent of the Church, absent teachers found it convenient to address letters to their distant flocks, and, as the first generation began to pass away, a desire arose to fix in permanent record the belief of the primitive community. One book, indeed, stands apart as a striking exception. The Apocalypse, which contains the visions of the seer of Patmos, must

have been occasioned less by the exigency of circumstances than by the creative impulses of the writer's soul. These writings, lying so near the fountains of the new religion, acquired the character of sacred scriptures, and, though not superseding the traditional doctrine, became an authoritative standard of appeal. In process of time they were gathered into one collection; and after considerable difference of opinion in regard to certain books the New Testament Canon was fixed by both the Greek and the Latin Churches in the latter half of the fourth century. In judging of Christianity, then, as a religion, and endeavouring to extract its finest spiritual influences, we ought not to confine ourselves absolutely to its sacred Scriptures, but search also for the transmitted fire of living and kindled souls; and it might even be maintained that if we were wholly cut off from its hereditary power we could not estimate it truly, for an interior spirit of life coming down through the generations must take possession of us before we can know it. But though this is true we must, as historical inquirers, have recourse to the earliest documents—documents with which confessedly none others can compete as exponents of primitive Christianity, and which are accepted by Christians of every persuasion as an authentic witness of their faith. Quite apart, then, from the dogmatic position of the Bible the New Testament must of necessity be the foremost object of study in the present department of theology.

The Old Testament, however, although the principal parts of its Canon were closed some considerable time before the Christian era<sup>1</sup> (how long before we must not here pre-judge), and though it is consequently unable to give us any direct knowledge of Christianity in its distinctive features, demands from us a no less exact attention. Christianity, whatever original elements it contained, sprang historically out of Judaism; and even if it had left Judaism completely behind it, its primitive position and purposes could not be understood without an examination of that background of ancient faith and practice which throws its principal figures into such strong relief. But Christianity did not leave Judaism behind it. On the contrary, it incorporated its most universal and spiritual elements, and professed to carry on to its promised fulfilment the teaching of Moses and the Prophets. Hence both the language and the thought of the New Testament are deeply coloured by those of the Old; and as we turn over its pages we see Christianity everywhere not only confronted by, but mingled with, Judaism. The two religions stand together in their opposition to heathenism. To the Gentile onlooker they appeared to be varieties of the same creed. In its conflict with idolatry and immorality Christianity only carried on the old warfare; and it was in antithesis to Judaism rather than heathenism that it was forced to define its

<sup>1</sup> A few books of the Hagiographa were called in question up to the later years of the first Christian century.

position, and disengage its original and characteristic doctrines into the light of self-conscious thought. The controversial portions of the New Testament are therefore largely occupied with determining the relations between the two religions, and abound in references and appeals to the ancient Scriptures. We can see, then, how impossible it would be to follow intelligently the narratives of the Gospels and Acts or the arguments of the Epistles, unless we were previously acquainted with those writings which were acknowledged as Divine alike by Rabbi and by Christian. But this is not all. The Old Testament was permanently adopted by Christendom as a part of its own Canon, and has thrown across the centuries the sublimity of its faith, the fervour and tenderness of its devotion, the impetuosity of its zeal ; so that we must study it, not only as the historical precursor of Christianity, but as one of its essential and lasting constituents.

There are certain books, besides those recognised as canonical in Protestant communities, which we cannot altogether neglect. The apocryphal writings of the Old Testament are included in the Canon by the Catholic Church, and were not without their influence upon ecclesiastical thought. They possess an historical value in helping to fill the lacuna between the narratives in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian era, and some of them throw an important light upon certain tendencies of Jewish belief. We can hardly make so honourable a claim on behalf of the New Testament apocrypha.

Several works which might have possessed more interest than those that have survived have been lost, and are known only through the references of ancient writers. The existing apocryphal gospels can illustrate only the folly of the men who composed them. It is necessary, however, in connection with the writings of the New Testament to notice, if only for the purpose of dismissal, these and similar would-be rivals. Some other compositions of a more serious cast, which at one time were read for edification in the churches, and were included in some manuscripts of the New Testament, belong rather to the sources of ecclesiastical history than to our present subject, though they cannot be left without notice in a history of the Canon.

It appears, then, that the object of study in this department of theology is the Bible, together with certain other writings which from various circumstances have clustered about it. We may now proceed to the several subdivisions which this study involves. Some difference of opinion may exist as to their proper arrangement; but I shall follow the order which appears to me the most suitable, and briefly state the reasons which guide me, without wasting time in controversy upon a matter of such subordinate interest.

1. *Biblical languages (Philologia sacra)*.—A knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written is presupposed in every Biblical inquiry. We cannot pass any judgment upon the books

which have to come under review until we can read them; and although we may form some general acquaintance with them from translations, it is clear that we cannot enter with any original power into their exact criticism or exegesis so long as we are dependent upon others for the meaning of the text. The study of the languages, therefore, is not only indispensable, but must occupy the first place.

In entering the field of Old Testament literature we are introduced to a family of languages widely different from our own, which were spoken in the south-west of Asia and in *Æthiopia*. These were formerly spoken of simply as "Oriental languages"; but as our knowledge extended farther east the name ceased to be distinctive, and they are now generally known as Semitic. It has been reserved for our own century to discover the most ancient form of that group of Semitic dialects which existed in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Babylonia, by means of deciphering the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions. Aramæan, which is closely akin to Assyrian, has been commonly divided into Eastern and Western, or Chaldee and Syriac; but it seems to be more correct to say that Chaldee is a later name for Aramæan, of which, nevertheless, Syriac is a distinct branch. Allied to Aramæan were the dialects of Canaan and Phœnicia; and out of the former most probably was developed Hebrew. Samaritan is a mixed dialect, standing between Hebrew and Aramæan. Farther south another division of the Semitic languages is found in the various dialects of

Arabia. Of these the speech of the tribe of Koreish gained the ascendancy through Mohammedan influence, and is the language of literature known as Arabic. Æthiopic is an offshoot of the Himyaritic dialect spoken in the south of Arabia. A complete mastery of any of these closely allied languages can be acquired only through the comparative study of them all; but this is the business of the philologist rather than the theologian, and the latter may gratefully accept the labours of the former, and content himself with an adequate knowledge of the portion of this large range of scholarship which most nearly affects his special pursuits.

The reading of the Old Testament requires an acquaintance with two of the above-named dialects. By far the larger part is written in Hebrew, the classical speech of the Israelites; but a few passages, Jeremiah x. 11; Ezra iv. 8 to vi. 18, vii. 12-26; Daniel ii. 4 to vii. 28, are composed in Chaldee. It is usual to include the vocabulary of these passages in Hebrew lexicons, which are specially intended to facilitate the study of the Bible. A fuller knowledge of Aramaean than can be acquired from such brief specimens is desirable, that the inquirer may be able to consult the Targums or Chaldee Paraphrases, which contain the traditional explanations accepted by the Rabbinical schools.

In passing to the New Testament we may be surprised that, though the greater portion of it proceeded from Jewish authors, it is written, not in Hebrew, but in Greek. The change reflects the altered genius of the

highest Israelitish faith, and marks the transition from a national to a universal religion. Christianity, with its broad outlook, and its large human aspirations, needed for its expression a language which, through the restless energy of its people and the splendour of its literature, had imprinted itself on the civilised world; and aiming, as it did, to control the thoughts of men no less than to exact their obedience and kindle their devotion, it required a more perfect intellectual instrument than is afforded by the simple structure of the Hebrew tongue. The change, however, was not so much the result of choice as of circumstances. Even in Palestine itself Hebrew had ceased to be the vernacular language, and had been superseded by Aramæan, a substitution which we must trace back to the influence of the Babylonian Captivity. Outside of Palestine the Jews, who were settled in great numbers in the midst of Greek communities, naturally adopted the speech of the Gentiles among whom they lived, and learned not only to express their own ideas in the language of the west, but to import its philosophical conceptions, and use them as moulds wherein to cast their inherited faith. In this process the influence of Alexandria was especially conspicuous. It was there that the Scriptures were translated into Greek, and that a form of eclectic philosophy arose which sought to justify the Jewish creed before the bar of universal reason, and which prepared the way for some of the doctrines of Christian theology. In this way Greek became the natural

vehicle of communication between Jews and the surrounding world, and even among large masses of Jews themselves ; and when Christianity sent its missionaries into all parts of the Roman empire, appealing both to Jews and Gentiles, it could not but adopt the language which had gained this acknowledged ascendancy. Hence the books of the New Testament not only now exist, but were originally written, in Greek, with the single exception of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which, if we may rely on a uniform tradition, was first published in Aramæan.

When, however, we begin to read the New Testament, we soon observe that we are not reading the Greek of Plato or Demosthenes, and that our classical training needs to be supplemented by a special study. Greek itself has lost its local peculiarities, and under the influence of the Macedonian empire has melted down into the *κοινὴ διάλεκτος*. Moreover, there is an evident infusion of foreign elements. The style is often more Aramæan than Greek ; and both verbal and, to a less extent, grammatical peculiarities betray the origin or associations of the writers. Besides this Jewish modification of the language there is also a Christian colouring, which affects the meaning of certain words, and which sometimes requires the most careful attention of the interpreter. The presence of these three elements of deviation from the classical standard with which we have become familiar at the University impresses such a peculiar character on New Testament Greek that it

cannot be properly understood without a separate investigation of its mingled sources, and without some familiarity, not only with the great writers of Greece, but with the style and idiom of Hebrew, and with the requirements of Christian thought. This is now generally recognised, though there was a time when the Purists maintained that the Holy Ghost could not dictate inferior Greek, and allowed the authority of a dogma to over-ride the plainest philological evidence. Glassius of Jena, who died in 1656, was the first who attempted, in his *Philologia Sacra*, to bring the grammatical peculiarities of the New Testament into scientific order. He was succeeded by some other writers of the seventeenth century; but after that period little was accomplished till Winer published in 1822 the work which is still the standard authority on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Textual Criticism*.—Having made ourselves acquainted with the languages of the Bible, we must next procure, so far as it is possible to do so, a correct text. This is indispensable in order to give security to our subsequent investigations, which have reference to the contents of the several books; for if, in discussing, for instance, the date of a work or the opinions of its author, we relied upon a passage or form of expression which did not belong to the original writer, we might be led seriously astray. The inquiry into the purity of the text is one of the branches of *Critica Sacra*, and is

<sup>1</sup> See Winer's "Grammatik," Einleitung, Sec. 3.

treated by both Hagenbach and Räbiger as only a subdivision of "Kritik." The other subdivision which they assign to criticism includes an investigation of the genuineness, that is, of the authorship and date of the Biblical writings. This seems to me to lead to great confusion; for under the head of Introduction they would discuss the *origin* of these writings, and surely the question of their authorship and date is fundamental in treating of their origin. On the other hand, this question has no necessary connection with Textual Criticism; for no matter by whom or when a work was first published, it must have possessed a certain text; and we may criticise the modern representatives of that text, and endeavour to reproduce it in its purity, without knowing anything about its author. It must be observed, moreover, that the methods of investigation and the principles of judgment are quite different in the two cases; so that a man might be an excellent textual critic who was, nevertheless, deficient in the peculiar qualifications needed for the more strictly historical and literary pursuit. This fact does not necessarily sanction the distinction into lower and higher criticism (terms which have also been employed to distinguish external and internal grounds of judgment); but it does justify our separation of Textual Criticism from questions of authorship, and our assigning to it a province complete in itself.

The necessity for this branch of theological study is due to the loss of the original documents, which, being

of perishable materials, have been destroyed by the ravages of time, and are now represented only by transcripts of various ages, all deviating more or less from one another. From these transcripts an enormous number of various readings have been collected; and it is the business of the textual critic to select from these in every passage that which is most probably genuine. Hence his work naturally falls into two parts. He must, in the first place, treat his subject as a science, discovering the laws of variation, ascertaining the character and comparative value of the sources from which various readings are drawn, and determining the principles of external and internal evidence on which his judgment must be based in the reconstruction of the text. In the second place, he must apply the knowledge thus gained as an art in the formation of a text founded on the largest available evidence, and selected in accordance with the critical principles previously established. These two distinct processes are combined in the great critical editions of the New Testament. The first is exhibited in the Prolegomena or Introduction, while the results of the editor's researches are given in the Greek text. The authorities are fully cited in the footnotes, so that the reader can exercise his own judgment in disputed passages.<sup>1</sup> The principles of Textual Criticism are, however, often treated separately; and when this is done, it is usual to append merely a selection of impor-

<sup>1</sup> The edition of Westcott and Hort is an exception to this statement.

tant passages to exemplify the application of the principles established in the body of the work.

The general method of inquiry and laws of evidence are very similar for both the Old and the New Testament. The detailed information must, of course, vary in regard to the three great sources from which readings are drawn — namely, Manuscripts, ancient Versions, and Citations by early writers, though some exception must be made in favour of the Versions, because several of them contain the whole Bible, and thus unite both Testaments in a common literary history. When we come to the results of criticism, we might expect to find a like fortune attending the two collections of Scripture; but this is far from being the case. While Griesbach, Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort, to mention only the most celebrated names, have published carefully revised texts of the Greek Testament, no one has ventured to render a similar service to the Hebrew; and while in regard to the former our stock of material has been diligently augmented by successive editors, the great collection of various readings made in the last century by Kennicott (1776-80), and De Rossi (1784-7), still remain the unsurpassed *apparatus criticus* for the study of the Hebrew text.

3. *Hermeneutics*.— The term *Hermeneutics* (from *ἐρμηνεύω*, to interpret) is employed to denote the science of literary interpretation. This science has, in

theology, to consider the universal laws of exegesis in their special application to the Bible. Two functions have been assigned to it: first, to formulate rules which will enable us to ascertain and bring into the light of our modern understanding the real contents of the Bible, neither omitting what is actually there, nor importing into it what is merely the product of subjective suggestion; secondly, to lay down the theory of exposition, in its three modes of Translation, Paraphrase, and Commentary.

This study must claim our attention next, because all the remaining Biblical inquiries involve questions of interpretation, even the origin and date of a book being at least partly determined by the meaning of certain passages. It might be thought that we must first lay down a doctrine respecting the nature of the Bible; for if it be the infallible word of God, its various voices must blend into a grand harmony, and it will be the fundamental rule of interpretation to admit not even the semblance of contradiction. But, without expressing any opinion upon this dogma, it seems to me that by assenting to such a plea we should invert the true order of inquiry. The nature of the Bible must be ascertained chiefly from the Bible itself; it is there that our evidence mainly lies; and not till we have ascertained its contents by an independent and impartial exegesis are we in a position to lay down a doctrine respecting their authority or value. If there are contradictions in the Bible, then it is not infallible, and in

such a case it is obvious that the prior assumption of the dogma must give rise to strained and evasive interpretations ; and, on the other hand, if the dogma be true, then a faithful exegesis will exhibit no contradictions, and the dogma will receive its most startling, because unsought, confirmation in the results of a study committed to no foregone conclusion. The same reasoning will apply to the dogma that the Church is the infallible interpreter of Scripture. Even if these dogmas are true, Hermeneutics must disregard them, and furnish rules by which, when we view the Bible simply as a literature, we may ascertain its real meaning. In saying this I do not imply that that meaning, in its deeper elements, will reveal itself to the merely logical understanding, which measures it, as it were, by rule and compass. We must have souls as well, though the exercise of our spiritual insight must be curbed and directed by rational methods. But what I do claim is an independent place for the science of interpretation, a place anterior to dogmas, and governed by its own laws, spiritual as well as intellectual ; and I cannot but think that apprehensions of this independence betray a secret disbelief in the dogmas which an unfettered procedure is deemed likely to imperil.

But why, it may be asked, should such a science exist at all ? Do not writings convey their own meaning to every intelligent mind, and does not language fail of its essential purpose when we are unable to understand it as soon as it is addressed to us ? This

would undoubtedly hold good with a composition precisely adapted to our present mental state ; but the case is completely altered when we have to deal with a series of works which, however universal in their scope, originally made their appeal to times and circumstances and intellectual habits widely different from our own. There are certain difficulties connected with the interpretation of the Bible, partly peculiar to itself, partly common to every ancient literature, which render a sound theory of exegesis indispensable to the Biblical student.

These difficulties are found, first, in the internal character of the writings. Not only must the foreign languages in which they are composed be mastered with the help of grammar and dictionary, but, as every language has its own genius, which reflects the spirit of the people who use it, we must become sympathetically familiar with their style and tone of thought and expression. Their antiquity also occasions much obscurity to the ordinary reader ; for they abound in allusions to a civilisation which is gone, or, if its traces still linger in the conservative East, is quite alien to our Western life ; they deal with dangers which no longer threaten, with hopes which may gild the imagination but stir no deep enthusiasm, with controversies whose eager fires have sunk into cold ashes ; and even their universal truths are lighted with an Oriental glow, and it needs an experienced eye to read off into their logical limitations the teachings which lurk in gorgeous imagery or seek to impress themselves through startling hyperbole.

A second source of difficulty exists in the theological associations which have clustered around the Bible. The various sects of Christendom are all anxious to read their own tenets in the pages of Scripture, and they are apt to import into certain passages, and even into single terms, a fulness of theological meaning which has been slowly elaborated in the schools. Nor are those exempt from this tendency who have broken loose from the authority of Christendom. Still the old phrases suggest to them the meaning which they learned in the nursery ; and in their new hostility to what they once believed, they are unable to examine the Scriptures in a clear historic light. These evils can be overcome only by a rigorous method of interpretation, carefully adopted and conscientiously applied.

Another reason which renders Hermeneutics necessary is supplied by the fact that various schools of interpretation have actually existed, and their claims must be considered, and either allowed or rejected upon rational grounds. Allegorical interpretation, which assumes a profounder meaning in Scripture than that which its words naturally convey, which sublimates every phrase that seems unworthy of a spiritual faith into some ethereal doctrine, converts patriarchs into mental qualities, and detects philosophical truths in the commonest historical incidents, was once regarded as the only key by which the Divine oracles could be unlocked. This mode of exegesis, which reached its

fullest development among the Alexandrian Jews, passed from them into the Christian Church, and its fading vestiges may be traced down to our own time. Allied to this was the mystical interpretation of the Middle Ages, which admitted, in addition to the literal sense, the allegorical, wherein dogmas were defined; the moral, affecting the principles of conduct; and the anagogic, which brought the text into relation with heavenly things.<sup>1</sup> The most prominent schools in Protestant times have been the dogmatic and the rationalistic, which may be classed together, as they both proceed upon the same fundamental assumption, that the Bible must be in agreement with certain accepted tenets, the dogmatist squaring every passage by his traditional creed, the rationalist admitting nothing which opposes the principles of reason, as he conceives them. In opposition to all these is the grammatico-historical method, which admits only one sense in Scripture, namely, that which the grammatical structure fairly yields when interpreted in the light of the historical circumstances, including the psychological conditions, of the times when the several books were written. Among these various systems Hermeneutics must, as I have said, make a selection justified by adequate reasons, and then unfold systematically the principles of the chosen method, and follow them down into the requisite detail, in their application, generally, to the Bible as a whole, and, specially, to the particular

<sup>1</sup> See Räbiger, p. 223. Reuss, "Gesch. d. heil. Schr. N.T.," Sec. 525.

groups into which the Biblical writings may for this purpose be distributed.

*4. Introduction, or History of the origin and collection of the Biblical writings.*—In deference to established usage I retain the vague word *Introduction* to designate the study which demands our attention next. The term is first found in Adrian, a writer probably of the fifth century, who published a little hermeneutical work under the title of *Eἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὰς θεῖας γραφάς*. After the Reformation it gradually became prevalent, first in its Greek, then in its Latin form,<sup>1</sup> from which it has passed into English, while the Germans have adopted their vernacular word, “*Einleitung*.” The more suggestive appellation of “*Histoire critique*” was employed in the seventeenth century by R. Simon, and his example has been partly followed in the present century by Reuss, who has called his *Introduction* to the New Testament “*Die Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments*,” and has more recently applied a similar title to a work on the Old Testament.

The indefinite character of the term *Introduction* appeared for a long time to be one of its recommendations; for the study which it denoted was equally indefinite. It included all those matters which it was desirable to know before entering on a careful perusal of the Scriptures, and the only connection which gave unity to its multifarious topics was their common refer-

<sup>1</sup> See Hahn, in *Herzog's Real-Encyklopädie*, 1st ed. iii. pp. 727-8.

ence to the Bible. It was then customary to divide the subject into General and Special, including under the former a variety of matters relating to the Scriptures as a whole, such as the original languages, the history of the Canon, translations, and textual criticism, and under the latter whatever concerned the books individually, their authorship, date, and so forth. This medley possessed for the student the same advantage as a dictionary, bringing under one cover the various points on which he was likely to require information; but it also resembled a dictionary in the lack of internal unity, and with the growing insight into theological method its want of scientific character has been increasingly felt. Every subject which claims to be an integral portion of the theological system ought to be formed into a whole by an organic principle which determines its compass and the bearing of its several parts. It was with a view to the establishment of such a principle that Reuss, in his well-known work referred to above, treated Introduction as a purely historical study. Under the guidance of this principle, however, he advances far beyond the limits which seem naturally marked by an investigation into primitive Christianity, or even by the requirements of exegesis, to which he himself regards his work as subsidiary.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the origin of the books and the history of the Canon, he discusses the history of the text, of translations, and of exegesis. Here, as in the old Introductions, we must acknowledge

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 4.

the practical value of this compendious survey of so many topics ; but when we attempt to fit them into the system which we are constructing, we find that some of them have already come under Textual Criticism, while others must wait till we reach Ecclesiastical History. What we really require to know at the precise point at which we have arrived is the value of the New Testament writings as sources of our knowledge of primitive Christianity, and this depends upon their origin and their acceptance by the Church. These, then, are the two subjects which I would include in an Introduction to the New Testament. It is obvious that the origin of the several books must come under discussion, for a late and spurious work cannot be put upon the same level as an early and genuine one, and the importance of a document rises, other things being equal, in proportion to its proximity to the events which it records. Thus, in considering the movements of thought in the Apostolic age it is necessary to determine, according to the best of our judgment, whether the Fourth Gospel belongs to the close of the first or the middle of the second century, and whether a letter ascribed to Paul is really his or only a figment of one of his disciples. The need of including the history of the Canon, instead of reserving it for Ecclesiastical History, is less evident. But whatever else was meant by the formation of the Canon, it expressed the judgment of the early Church upon the primitive documents of Christianity. The New Testament was accepted as the one faithful literary

witness of the mind of Christ; and it is therefore incumbent upon us to ascertain the worth of the Church's judgment, to know when and how it was exercised, and to learn the degrees of certainty and uncertainty with which the different books were received. But besides their logical inclusion in our immediate purpose, it is clear that the two lines of inquiry here indicated stand in such close mutual relation that it would be inconvenient to separate them from one another. To a large extent they traverse the same evidence and deal with the same results; and for the most part the history of the Canon can only exhibit in a single survey the historical testimonies which we examine in detail and without connection in treating of the several books.

The Old Testament stands upon a somewhat different footing. In regard to Christianity it is not a source of our knowledge, but rather one of the sources of the religion itself. Christianity found and adopted it as its own earliest Canon, and from this point of view it is necessary to make acquaintance with its previous literary history. There is, however, another aspect under which it demands consideration. It bears the same relation to Judaism that the New Testament does to Christianity, and we have already seen how essential it is to study the two religions in combination. As a source, then, of our knowledge of Judaism it needs the same two lines of inquiry which we have marked out in regard to the New Testament.

It will now be seen that, according to the view here unfolded, *Introduction* is a purely historical study, resting on a thorough criticism of the evidences on which our results are based ; and its compass is determined by the necessity of ascertaining the literary character of the sources from which we derive our knowledge of primitive Christianity, and of the origin and development of that prior Hebrew religion out of which Christianity sprang.

In the treatment of this subject it is the usual, though not invariable practice, to make a broad separation between the Old and New Testaments, and to discuss them in independent works. If, with Räbiger,<sup>1</sup> we regarded *Introduction* simply as a history of Hebrew literature to the downfall of the Jewish nationality, we could hardly justify this separation, notwithstanding its practical convenience. But, with the view of our subject which has been here given, the division is a natural one ; for the two inquiries, however closely they are related to one another, and however desirable it may be to notice their connection, nevertheless subserve perfectly distinct ends. In the further distribution of our subject the same principles may be observed in each department. In each we have to consider the origin of the books individually, and to trace the history of their collection into a Canon ; and we must first decide which of these subjects is to take precedence. On this point the practice of different writers varies,—

<sup>1</sup> P. 269, sqq.

Bleek, for instance, preferring the second place for the history of the Canon, while Hilgenfeld chooses the first. For my own part I think there are good reasons for following the order adopted by Bleek. It is, in the first place, the historical order, the formation of a Canon being necessarily subsequent to the publication of the books which it includes. In the second place, almost every step of our way through the first two centuries bristles with criticism, and while our attention is constantly engrossed with *minutiæ* it is impossible to obtain that clear historical picture which we desire in surveying the fortunes of the Canon. It seems best, therefore, to get through our critical labours in the discussion of the individual books, where this objection does not apply ; and then, when we come to the history of the Canon, we shall be able to touch the subject with a lighter hand, and weave our already sifted materials into a connected narrative.

When we have determined the order in which these two divisions shall be taken, an important question arises as to the method to be adopted in the discussion of the separate writings. Shall we follow some classification founded on their literary or other characteristics, or shall we, as in a history of literature, pursue a chronological arrangement? It is a serious objection to the latter method that so many questions are still *sub judice*, and, whatever arrangement we adopted, we should inevitably prejudge the object of our inquiry. Nevertheless, the advantages of the synthetical method

are so great, in bringing before the mind's eye the broad results of critical investigation and the course of literary development, that an Introduction hardly seems complete which entirely dispenses with it. I would accordingly propose to break up this part into two subdivisions. In the first we must attend to the books without regard to their chronological order, and inquire critically into their origin, that is, into their integrity, their authorship, the circumstances under which they arose, and the time and place of their composition. In doing so we may group them in any way that seems most convenient. Thus, in the Old Testament we may adopt the ancient distribution into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, or prefer a more modern one, into historical, prophetical, and poetical books. In either case the Apocrypha, as being written in a different language, had better be treated separately. In the New Testament we may divide the books into historical, including the Gospels and Acts; epistolary, comprising the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, and the Catholic Epistles; and, finally, allegorical, represented in the Canon only by the Apocalypse. In connection with each of these classes the apocryphal works of the same kind must be brought under review. Having completed our tedious critical labours, we must now proceed, in the second subdivision, to collect our results into their chronological order, and give a consecutive history, uninterrupted by critical discussion, of the origin and growth of the

literature which we have hitherto viewed only in its isolated fragments.

We have thus finished the investigations which concern the general literary character of the Bible, and we are now prepared to make a nearer acquaintance with its contents ; or, in technical language, we pass from formal to material studies.

5. *Archæology*.—In entering on the exact study of the contents of the Bible we experience some difficulty in settling the proper order in which to conduct our investigations. At first sight it might seem as if every thing else must depend on a prior exegesis of the various books ; but a few moment's reflection will convince us that a sound exegesis, conformable to the historical conditions under which the books were written, must depend on a prior knowledge of the history and antiquities of the Hebrew people. The warnings and denunciations, the hopes and encouragements of the Prophets, for instance, can be fully understood only in connection with the circumstances of the times ; and the great principles which underlie the Pauline Epistles are unfolded in their application to local and temporary controversies, a knowledge of which is indispensable to the interpreter. So, again, the innumerable allusions to manners and customs, places and scenery, are lost upon those who are unacquainted with the natural and social conditions amid which the Hebrew literature

arose. We thus seem to be involved in a circle from which there is no escape, history presupposing exegesis, and exegesis presupposing history. The two studies are undoubtedly mutually helpful, and neither can be brought to its perfection without the other. Yet in a scheme of orderly exposition I think history must take the precedence; for it does not involve a detailed interpretation of the whole Bible, and as we have already mastered the laws of Hermeneutics, we are prepared to deal separately with the passages which are required by the purpose of the historian.

A somewhat similar difficulty arises in fixing the relation of history and archæology. Some of the subjects which come under the latter head, such as the physical conditions among which the Hebrews lived, form a natural preparation for the study of the history; but, on the other hand, an account of the civil and religious institutions of the Jews may seem to belong to the history itself, or, if raised into the dignity of a separate discipline, to be its sequel rather than its precursor. Nevertheless if we assume, as we are fairly entitled to do, a general, though not a critical, acquaintance with the historical narratives of the Bible, no harm can result from placing first the whole of the subjects which are treated under Archæology. This science, though closely related to history, is distinct from it. History traces the succession and mutual dependence of events; Archæology investigates the conditions of a particular time, which, although they

must receive notice in a general history, are yet of sufficient importance to demand a separate treatise for their complete discussion.

The name of Biblical Archæology, like that of Introduction, suffers from an unfortunate vagueness, which makes it possible to assign different limits to the study. We may, however, accept the definition of Gesenius, according to which it is the science which makes us acquainted with the physical and social condition of those peoples among whom the Biblical writings arose, and to whom they refer.<sup>1</sup> From this definition we may readily deduce the divisions of the subject; and, as these are given very lucidly by Hagenbach,<sup>2</sup> I will follow in the main his classification.

(a.) *Biblical Geography*.—It is evident that our first requirement is familiarity with the places which were the scene of the events recorded in the Bible. Not till we know where the Israelites dwelt, and where were situated their towns and villages, their mountains, rivers and lakes, desert and sea, can we bring their exploits vividly before the historical imagination. Palestine accordingly must occupy the largest share of attention. But as the Israelites were, through a variety of circumstances, brought into connection with several other nations, we must give our survey a wider sweep. We must make acquaintance with Egypt, from which the enslaved race broke forth into the freedom of the desert. We must explore the Peninsula of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hagenbach, p. 137, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 138-140.

Sinai, which has left the impress of its stern and sublime features upon the Jewish legislation. We must follow the captive people into Assyria and Babylonia, and learn something of Persia, with whose empire they were afterwards incorporated. When we come to the period of the New Testament we must extend our view westwards over Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. In connection with some of the more important places, especially Jerusalem, we must pass on to the more minute study, known as topography, without which it is impossible to follow some of the leading events both in earlier or later times.

(b.) *Biblical Physiography (Physica sacra)*.—Having acquired the necessary information respecting the superficial aspects and political divisions of the Biblical lands, we must next learn something of their physical characteristics. The geological formation and the climate, by which the scenery of a country is shaped, inevitably affect not only the bodily frame, but the thought and feeling of a people; and although we are in the habit of supposing that the ancients had little appreciation of the beauties of nature, the Bible abounds in imagery drawn from natural phenomena. We must know the character of the hills and valleys, the mountain torrent and the parched gully, the glaring expanse of the desert, and the tropical verdure of the river bed. Nor must we forget the mineral treasures, or the plants from the cedar of Lebanon to the lily of the field, or the beasts and birds and ravaging locusts.

All these have adorned the language of Psalmist and Prophet, or supplied the great Teacher with a metaphorical dress in which to clothe his lessons of wisdom.

(c.) *Social Antiquities of the Bible*.—Having viewed the surroundings amid which the people lived, we pass on to consider their mode of life. We must notice, first, the action of man upon nature—his pastoral habits, agriculture, hunting, fishing, mining; and, in connection with this, his use of natural materials in the construction of dwellings, the manufacture of clothing and ornaments, and the preparation of food. Under each of these heads we must treat also of the necessary implements. We may next consider the relation of men to one another—marriage and domestic life, education, slavery, social intercourse, and commerce. Under the last head must be included means of conveyance by land and sea, measures, weights, and money. Finally, we must study the sadder elements of social existence, the treatment of diseases, death, funerals, sepulchres, and mourning.

(d.) *Political Antiquities of the Bible*.—These comprise the mode of government, judicial proceedings, and military affairs; and as political institutions are seriously modified with the lapse of time, they must be considered in connection with certain periods distinguished by strongly marked characteristics, the Commonwealth, the Monarchy, the state of subjection to a foreign power. The last subdivision necessarily includes some notice of the political arrangements of the conquerors.

(e.) *Sacred Antiquities of the Bible.*—This subject is conveniently divided into four principal parts. The first treats of sacred places,—the tabernacle, the temple, the synagogues. The second refers to sacred seasons,—the sabbath, the sabbatical year and year of jubilee, the new moons, and the festivals. The third relates to sacred persons,—judges, prophets, priests, Levites, scribes, and officers of the synagogue. The fourth deals with sacred things,—circumcision, sacrifices, dedications, vows and oaths, purifications, public worship. The idolatrous religions with which the Israelites were brought so frequently into contact, and with which, in the earlier periods, they were so much infected, are reviewed under the head of Comparative Religion, and must be noticed here only so far as they serve by their resemblances and contrasts to illustrate the peculiarities of the Hebrew ceremonial.

(f.) *Arts and Sciences of the Hebrews.*—The artistic faculty of the Israelites was displayed in poetry, music, and architecture. Their scientific knowledge was, of course, of an elementary kind, and the sources of our information are far from complete ; but we must consider their history and chronology, their arithmetic and astronomy, with the resulting divisions of time, surveying, geography, medicine, and natural history.

This copious variety of subject does not consist of unrelated details, but, when viewed collectively, gives us a picture of ancient Hebrew life, and introduces us to a civilisation so unlike our own that it requires, for

its effective study, the sober accuracy of critical research to be supplemented by the constructive energy of a rich imagination. He who can never rid his mind of nineteenth century standards can do little justice to the past; and Biblical Archaeology will have accomplished its purpose when it transports us from the present age of cold and inquisitive reason, and so steeps us, as it were, in warm Oriental emotions and in old world ideas and practices, that we shall be able to estimate aright the pristine power of monotheistic faith, and measure its grandeur not only when it cries aloud against the sins of the people, but when, mingling with a conscience not yet fully enlightened, it expresses itself through the narrowness and barbarity of human passion. Only through an intimate knowledge of the heart and life of a nation can we appreciate the Divine idea which wrought amid the struggling mass of error and sin, and slowly evolved itself into some high, perhaps, as in the case of the Jews, some supreme and culminating manifestation.

*6. History of the Israelites down to the destruction of the Jewish nationality by the Romans.*—Having obtained the necessary knowledge of the natural surroundings and the mode of life of the Hebrew people, we must follow their eventful history, which had such a remarkable influence on the form of their literature and on the development of their faith. In doing so we must be guided simply by the rules of historical criticism, and

not allow our judgment to be swayed either by the presumed infallibility of the Biblical records or by a reactionary desire to prove that they are merely human compositions. With these questions the historian as such has nothing to do. We are still engaged in laying the foundation on which to erect a true doctrine of the Bible; and the results of impartial historical investigation must largely affect our ultimate decision. If, for instance, we find that parallel accounts of the same event are mutually independent, and nevertheless in exact agreement with one another, and that at the same time they bear the marks of unerring accuracy, that will be a point in favour of the dogma that the Bible is the unmixed product of miraculous inspiration. But if we find that some parallel accounts are not strictly reconcilable, or if, in the exercise of our best judgment, we see reason to believe that some narratives are legendary,—that is, clothing the naked historical fact in the poetical or other accessories of popular tradition,—or mythical,—that is, expressive of an idea through an assumed historical form,—we shall be furnished with an argument which must be duly estimated in favour of modifying the traditional dogma. We must, then, for the very sake of our future doctrine, discard from the present study all doctrinal considerations; and we may perhaps venture to assert that he would be the best qualified for the task who knew nothing of theological controversies, but came to it as to a fresh field of history, equipped only with large

human sympathies, keen historical insight, and well disciplined judgment.

In making these remarks, I assume that the Bible is the grand source from which the history must be drawn. It is so for a very considerable period ; but for the time subsequent to the building of the second temple we are mainly dependent upon other authorities, and even within the Biblical limits we are not without extraneous information upon several interesting points. Foremost among these authorities may be mentioned the inscriptions of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monuments. We must consult also some of the Greek and Roman writers, and the extracts which have been preserved (chiefly by Josephus and Eusebius) of the work of the Egyptian Manetho (about 280 B.C.) Among the Apocryphal writings the First Book of Maccabees is especially valuable. The works of Josephus ought to be made use of throughout ; but they are of the highest importance for the history of his own time and the time immediately preceding. Philo affords us some vivid glimpses into the condition of the Alexandrian Jews. And finally, the Rabbinical writings must not be neglected.

In the arrangement of the subject four great events, each constituting a crisis in the history of the people, naturally mark off four distinct periods. The first embraces the primeval history, from Abraham to the Exodus. In the second the struggle to obtain a position of national independence and unity culminates

in the establishment of the monarchy. In the third we notice the climax of Israel's prosperity and power under a single sceptre, and then the gradual decline of the divided kingdoms, till one vanishes from history in irretrievable defeat, and the other is carried away into a captivity equally hopeless, except to the prophetic eye of faith. The fourth carries us through the full development of legal Judaism, and the subjection of the people under foreign domination, except during the brief glories of the Maccabees, to the time when the nation was finally broken and dispersed by the legions of Rome. For our immediate purpose we may regard this event as having occurred when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, 70 A.D.; but the historian can hardly help extending his survey to the fierce revolts under Trajan and Hadrian, when the last hopes of national independence were ruthlessly extinguished, 135 A.D.

It might seem only reasonable to include within this history the lives of Christ and the Apostles; but these, though of world-wide significance, made no visible impression upon the political history of Judaism, and their adequate treatment would accordingly occupy a space out of all proportion to their apparent influence upon contemporary events. It seems best, therefore, while the general historian contents himself with marking their place amid the social forces of the time, to reserve a separate department for their detailed and critical investigation. This is a matter, however, which in actual practice must be left to the discretion of each

writer; and Ewald (to pass over less distinguished names) has incorporated his account of Christ and the Apostles in his great History of the people of Israel.

The history of that portion of our fourth period in which Christianity arose has recently been treated by German theologians under the name of "Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte," History of New Testament times. This title was first adopted by Schneckenburger, whose lectures on the subject were published in 1862, after the author's death. It was his intention to supply the needed historical framework for the narratives of the New Testament, and he describes in successive parts the condition of the Gentile and the Jewish worlds.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of Hausrath is somewhat different. He wishes to describe the time in its relation to the great religious facts of the New Testament,<sup>2</sup> and therefore includes these facts themselves within the range of his narrative. Schürer, in his excellent handbook, follows a more limited plan. He confines his attention to Jewish history, and in doing so seeks only to unfold the historical conditions amid which Christianity arose, without entering the domain of the religion itself. He not only relates the political history of the Jews from the time of the Maccabees to the reign of Hadrian, but describes in a second part the inner life of the people, and thus brings before the attention of the reader several of the more important topics touched upon under the

<sup>1</sup> See Schürer, "Lehrbuch der Neutest. Zeitgesch.," 1874, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See the Pref. p. viii. 2d ed.

head of Archæology. So conceived, the History of the New Testament period is in admirable agreement with the plan which we have sketched, and forms a suitable introduction to the study of the history which the New Testament itself contains.

7. *Exegesis.*—We are at last prepared to take up the Biblical writings one by one, and proceed to the systematic study of their contents. In the actual exercise of the art of interpretation it is customary to bring together under a single view the varied information which has been acquired in other fields of study, so far as it can throw light upon the book under examination. Not only are historical and archæological allusions explained in the course of the exegesis itself, but the whole commentary is preceded by an introduction, in which questions affecting the origin of the work are discussed ; and, when the nature of the composition requires it, its general purport is considered, and its contents unfolded in a brief, but carefully articulated synopsis. In the commentary we have to apply the rules of Hermeneutics to the text, and move cautiously from verse to verse, often from word to word, in order to ascertain the precise connection of thought and the exact force of individual expressions. This process is necessarily tedious, and is apt to become dull, and may serve to explain that dryness which so frequently mars the work of the interpreter. A learned pedantry which gives us only the dissected corpse of our author, instead

of lifting his words out of the dust of ages and making them tremulous once more with living fire, fails in the leading object of exegesis. It is necessary, therefore, to do something more than wield our grammar and dictionary, and adhere to the laws of interpretation. These laws are a useful check upon the judgment, and help to guard us from thrusting alien ideas into the work which we expound, but they cannot by themselves introduce us into the spirit of ancient writings, and draw aside the veil from the soul of Prophets and Apostles. In order to accomplish this the commentator must not only have learning, caution, and impartiality, but must add to these the gifts of spiritual insight, historical imagination, and literary skill, so as to interweave with the duller texture of his exposition some vivid colouring which will make the past live before the mind of the reader, and ancient aspirations and ideas glow with something of their original splendour.

A distinction is drawn in Germany between *Exposition* and *Explanation* ("Schriftauslegung" and "Schrifterklärung"), which are both included in Exegesis. In the former we strictly confine ourselves to an objective statement of the author's meaning; but in the latter we exercise our judgment upon the facts which are related and the sentiments which are expressed; we endeavour to exhibit the grounds and connections of the thought, and to seize the abstract and universal principle which is presented only in one of its concrete applications; and we may even illustrate many points by analogies

existing among ourselves. From this enlargement of the writer's meaning, however, which we adopt for the purpose of gaining a clearer insight into his mental position, we must carefully distinguish the practical application of Scripture, which belongs to Homiletics rather than Exegesis.

A shorter form of interpretation than the commentary is furnished by the Paraphrase. This cannot be successfully prepared till the commentator has completed his work; for the results of the latter are assumed as the basis on which it rests. It aims simply at such an expansion of the original text as will bring out the meaning of all dubious words, and exhibit clearly all difficult connections of thought. It may perhaps be described as a condensed commentary, relieved of the arguments by which its conclusions are established.

Finally, a Translation is the briefest kind of interpretation. This, too, reposes on the labours of the commentator; but, unlike the Paraphrase, it does not bring these labours prominently into view. It is its business faithfully to reproduce the original work, giving its full and exact force to every word, but not removing any ambiguities or obscurities that are really there. It must as far as possible retain the style of the various writers; but, while aiming at literal accuracy, and preserving the flavour of an ancient and Oriental literature, it must not violate the idiom of its own language, or descend into the uncouth and barbarous.

A translation cannot supersede a study of Hebrew and Greek, or be rendered available for critical purposes ; and the attempts which are sometimes made at a slavish exactness, so as to delude the English reader into the conceit that he is on a level with the scholar, sacrifice the soul to the body, and destroy the literary and spiritual aroma of the Bible.

8. *History of religious ideas among the Israelites down to the time of Christ.*—The subject on which we now enter might, more conformably to usage, be described as the Theology of the Old Testament ; but I prefer the more comprehensive name, because it is essential to our purpose to know the exact point of development which religion had reached when Christianity appeared ; and, although the Old Testament is our most important source, yet in the latest period we are obliged to have recourse to other authorities as well. It is the object of the present study to exhibit in a systematic form the religious ideas which prevailed among the people, or were maintained by any distinguished teacher, in the successive periods of Hebrew history. By the term religious ideas must be understood not only the belief entertained respecting the nature and character of God, but the whole conception of the relations between God and man ; so that ethical ideas, which among the Israelites rested on the sanction of an acknowledged Divine Law, must be included. The material for this study has, so far as the Old Testament is concerned,

been accumulated by our Exegesis ; but there the topics which we have to treat lie confusedly mixed with other subjects, and in the order in which they happen to occur in the literature, not in that which is demanded by logical thought. We have now to classify them, to disengage them from irrelevant surroundings, and to frame them into a connected scheme of doctrine, so that their mutual relations and organic union may be easily apprehended by the mind. In the fulfilment of this task we might content ourselves with taking up the books one by one, in the order in which they occur in the Canon, and arranging their theological doctrines in accordance with a preconceived plan. This might more than satisfy the old *theologia topica*, which, taking the accepted dogmatics as its clue, merely brought together *loci classici* or *dicta probantia* to establish the several dogmas by Scriptural authority. But it is evident that the requirements of a history cannot be thus met, or the development of religious conceptions brought into view. We must, therefore, in the first place, assume the results of our Introduction, and arrange the books in their proper chronological order ; and then, in dealing with each writer, we must not distribute his thoughts into an unvarying series of dogmatic compartments, but must endeavour to grasp his great determining ideas, and, assigning to these the foremost place, range his collateral thoughts in due subordination. In this way, instead of degrading the author into a mere demonstrator of our own views, we shall, with truer reverence

and docility, obtain a picture of his living mind and organising faith, and gain some insight into those grand processes of thought or inspiration which are so much more interesting than the bald results. To facilitate this method it is convenient to divide our history into periods, marked by certain prevailing characteristics. Since the time of De Wette two great periods have been distinguished, those of Hebraism and of Judaism, marked off from one another by the Captivity. The establishment of the monarchy, followed as it was by the erection of the Temple and the greater centralisation of the national worship, offers a favourable point for dividing the first of these periods. In each division the historian must depict the salient features of Israel's aspiration, and trace the connection between the outer and the inner history of the people, noticing the effects of hope and fear, of hostility and of friendship towards surrounding nations, of victorious freedom and the baffled grief of servitude, and not only following the exalted flight of the prophet, but scanning that dulness of heart which so often refused to hear. As a result of the whole treatment we ought to understand how the child-like faith of Abraham developed into that vast and complicated system of legal enactments and ceremonial usage which everywhere confronted the freer movements of the Christian spirit, and strove, with the national pride of a dignified or fanatical conservatism, to prevent the rise and spread of those universal ideas which were really the genuine outgrowth of its own profoundest faith.

9. *Life of Christ.*—We are at last prepared to take up the great problem which has furnished the determining principle of this whole department of theology, to view Christianity in its origin, to penetrate its essential genius, and to analyse and dispose in their logical relations the earliest expressions of its faith. In the prosecution of this task the life of Christ demands our first attention. It is there that we must seek for the germinating and organising spirit to which the religion owes its permanent vitality, and which is still striving amid human darkness to unfold and realise its implicit ideas. It might be thought that this would be a study of absorbing and exalting interest, bringing us into closer contact with the greatest soul in history, and filling us with divine and quickening thoughts. But although this may be the final result of our labours, it is far from being felt in our first approaches, and there is no subject where the opposition between the critical and the religious spirit is so keenly expressed. This is not merely due to the extreme opinions which, owing partly to the comparative novelty of the investigation, partly to reaction against ecclesiastical dogmatism, have been advanced in some quarters; but the difficulty resides in the very nature of the subject itself. Love, and especially religious love, is not analytical. It receives the whole impression, and contentedly abandons itself to the transforming power; and when it is asked to justify itself, and told that love is blind and prejudiced, it would be satisfied with saying, “Whereas I

was blind, now I see." It shrinks from dissecting the dear, familiar narratives, and testing their credibility by the sharp methods of historical criticism; and when, as has sometimes happened under the lofty assumption of impartiality, aspersions are cast on the character of Christ, it feels the reproach with far more than the pain of personal insult. Yet, were it only because theology has already entered upon this task, it would be necessary for the theologian still to attempt it. The life of Christ has been a prominent theme for discussion during the present century, and this discussion has contributed not a little to the marked change which is stealing over theological thought. It is, therefore, no longer possible for the cultivated theologian to take the Gospels simply as they stand, and accept, or think that he accepts, every word unquestioned as he reads. Whatever may be his final conclusions, he must reach them by the path of research and criticism, and be able to justify them before the bar of scientific history.

The permanent necessity for this study, however, is grounded, not on the circumstances of our time, but on the nature of the sources from which our information must be drawn. The four Gospels were written, at the earliest, almost a generation after the date of the crucifixion, so that there was time for recollection to become confused or for popular misapprehension to add some legendary elements to the narratives. In regard to two of the Gospels, the claim has never been made that they were written by eye-witnesses of the events which they

relate ; and the traditional belief in regard to the other two has been vigorously assailed in recent times. Again, the Johannine representation of Christ differs considerably from the synoptical ; and among the synoptics themselves, while there is a general agreement and often a close parallelism, there is also considerable variation of detail. We must add that all four Gospels ascribe to Christ a number of miracles, such as in other histories are generally regarded with more than suspicion. All these circumstances render it necessary to test the credibility of our sources ; to form a judgment whether, and to what extent, and under what conditions, accounts of miraculous occurrences may be trusted ; to arrange the events in their proper chronological order, and to criticise each as it comes before us.

In following out this attempt we must be guided by a strictly historical method. Historical investigation has its own laws, and its own independent title to be heard ; and to assume at starting any particular dogma in regard to the nature or office of Christ is simply to brow-beat our witnesses, and prejudge the question. The principle which has been already enunciated in other connections is applicable here. Each item of evidence must be estimated according to its own intrinsic merits, and not interpreted in the light of the conclusion which we desire to reach. Our doctrine respecting Christ must largely depend on an examination of his life and teaching, and for this very reason the examination itself must be conducted without any ulterior view.

But in saying this I do not for a moment suppose that we can solve our problem by a mere criticism of details. We want to penetrate the inmost recesses of a soul, and discover what was really there, what was the spring of its spiritual being, what was its purpose, what were the sources of its power ; and if we confine ourselves to a shrewd analysis of isolated events, we may succeed at last only in laying the dead body in the tomb, while the immortal spirit passes utterly beyond our ken. A soul can be understood only by a soul, and he who has no sympathy with the ideal of life presented by the Gospels cannot interpret for us their sublime portrait. Though we may not bring to our inquiry a preconceived dogma, as little may we come with dry and meagre hearts, and hope by ever so much turning of our logical key to open the central treasure-house of the world's history. We must have some knowledge of moral causation, so as not to ascribe magnificent effects to trumpery causes ; we must have realised in ourselves the awfulness of that religious power which Christ has exercised over mankind ; and we are bound to bring to the interpretation of details that unique impression which is produced by his life as a whole. There is no pursuit in which we need so rich a combination of varied qualities, none where the acquisitions and faculties of cold and intrepid reason must blend so completely with the admiration, reverence, and love of a lofty and expansive soul. If these qualities be present in their due proportions, and if we have at all apprehended the meaning of a religion

"not of the letter, but of the spirit," we shall not be greatly troubled by any destructive conclusions which our allegiance to truth may require us to accept ; and we shall see in time that the destruction of error is only the negative aspect of spiritual creation, and that the divine reality always transcends the human conception. For him who has this faith it is possible to engage in the severest investigations of modern criticism, and yet to look hopefully for the day when the import of Christ's life shall be understood as never before, and when his spirit shall take possession of the hearts of men with a depth, and power, and reality, of which the Church hitherto has hardly dared to dream.

10. *Lives of the Apostles, or History of the Apostolic age.*—This subject is evidently necessary to complete our picture of primitive Christianity ; for it was under the influence of the Apostles that the various churches were founded which became the first organised representatives of the new religion throughout the Roman empire. This period, however, cannot be omitted from ecclesiastical history, and it might therefore seem proper to reserve it for future treatment. This would be the case were it not that its great importance renders it insufficient to consider it in a subordinate section of a general history, and demands that thorough and exhaustive investigation which can be attempted only in a separate work ; and, as soon as it is detached and placed in a department of its own, it clearly belongs to that division of theology

which inquires into the *origines* of Christianity. It thus forms the connecting link between Biblical theology and ecclesiastical history. The subject, though on a lower level, is similar in character and scope to the life of Christ, and the general principles which were laid down in the last section need not be repeated.

Our main sources are the book of Acts and the Epistles, and these must be compared with one another and criticised. Some information may be gleaned from later tradition, and from the state of parties and opinions which we find when the post-Apostolic age first emerges from obscurity, and becomes an object of distinct knowledge. From these incomplete materials we have to construct as best we may the edifice of our history, and describe the movements and fortunes of the principal actors, the establishment and constitution of churches, the influence of the new doctrine and life, the relation of the Church to the world, the appearance of divergent tendencies within the Church itself, the rivalry of parties and conflict of opinions, the solution of difficulties and the underlying unity of faith. Thus, witnessing the earliest operations of the Christian spirit, we gain a clearer apprehension of its nature, and become better qualified to strip off its accidental and temporary accompaniments from its permanent and unalterable essence.

11. *Theology of the New Testament*.—We are now able to accomplish the final purpose of our Biblical labours, and gather together into one systematic treatise

the thoughts of primitive Christianity. This study of the New Testament is so precisely similar to the corresponding study of the Old, that I need only refer back to sub-section 8 for an exposition of its object and mode of treatment. Here too, although the period under consideration is so much shorter, we can notice a development of thought, and distinguish different aspects under which Christianity was regarded, so that we may conveniently adopt the order of time for the arrangement of the main divisions of our subject. First comes the doctrine of Christ according to the oldest tradition, represented in the synoptical Gospels. Owing to the marked influence of Paul, we next have three phases of doctrine grouped around his name. The first is the primitive-Apostolic doctrine in the pre-Pauline period. Then Paulinism itself is brought under review. And thirdly the primitive-Apostolic doctrine in the post-Pauline period demands our attention. Last of all we must consider a theology as peculiar, and as influential as that of Paul himself, the Johannine.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that these divisions, and especially the first, third, and fifth, are so important that each might form the subject of a separate treatise. Works of this kind are of extreme value, especially to those who have already taken at least a cursory view of the whole field; but the object of this department of theology is not accomplished till the results obtained by these separate labours are brought

<sup>1</sup> This is the order followed by Weiss in his "Lehrbuch der Biblischen Theologie des Neuen Testaments."

together under one comprehensive survey, and the doctrines of primitive Christianity are presented in the order of their genesis and in their mutual relations. Thus only can we gain a view of early Christian theology as a whole, and see it not only in the depth and intensity of individual expression, but in all the breadth and richness of its complex manifestation.

In concluding our notice of Biblical theology, we must observe that many of the departments which we have treated separately and consecutively are in actual practice frequently blended with one another. A life of Christ, for instance, is apt to trespass on the provinces of introduction, archæology, history, and exegesis. It does so, however, only to give completeness to a distinct work, which cannot safely presuppose the requisite knowledge in its readers. But if a whole system of Biblical theology were constructed upon the foregoing plan, this blending of departments would be unnecessary, for at each successive step we might assume the results already gained. Though, owing to the inevitable distribution of so vast a field among specialists, this is not done, still it is advantageous to have an outline of Biblical science as a whole, so that we may understand the correlation of its parts, and assign to its due place any particular line of study which we may think proper to adopt.

## SECTION IV.

*Ecclesiastical History.*

Having made ourselves acquainted with Christianity in its original form, and traced its connection with the past out of which it sprang and with the surrounding world into which it was born, we must endeavour to complete our knowledge of it by regarding it in its progressive action upon mankind, and in its internal development. Were it merely a system of thought, conceived and elaborated by a single mind, and then left to take its chance among studious men, we might be content to know it in its isolated completeness, and feel only a languid interest in the story of its acceptance. But since it has always expressed itself through an organised body of believers, and has made it a dominant aim to ameliorate society and establish the kingdom of God upon earth, we naturally ask how it has realised its ideal, and can estimate it as a spiritual and regenerating force only through a study of its history. Again, whatever view we may take of the relation between the teaching of Christ and the Christianity of the present day, it is admitted that the explicit forms of the two are not identical, but, to adopt the most favourable opinion, the implicit germs of doctrine in the primitive revelation have unfolded themselves, through a true process of development, into

the present dogmatic and ceremonial system. In saying this we seem to assume the unity of Christendom; but in reality Christendom is split up into a number of sects, each giving a different interpretation of the Gospel, and thus proving that the development has, in some directions, been morbid. This power of divergent growth in Christianity can be understood only from its continuous history. These two forces, then, which are found in Christianity,—the force which impresses it upon the surrounding world, and the force which expands it from within into richer and more varied expression,—render the study of its history imperative upon him who would fully apprehend its meaning and its value. The department of theology, therefore, which treats of this subject completes the purpose which we had in view when we engaged in Biblical research, and must properly occupy the next place. It also prepares the way for subsequent pursuits by pressing on our attention the results of Christian experience and presenting a great mass of material ready to our hands. No wise man would attempt to construct a body of theological doctrine in total ignorance of what had been already done. By following the course of theological thought, by mingling in the warfare of ancient controversies, by plunging into the problems of successive ages and seeing how they were solved by the master-minds of Christendom, we enlarge and strengthen our faculties of reflection, and perceive more clearly the spiritual roots from which different forms of belief have

grown; we become keener in detecting the germs of error in ourselves, and juster in our estimate of opinions opposed to our own; and we thus acquire that power of spiritual criticism (using the word in its highest sense) which results only from a combination of rich religious experience with extensive knowledge and intellectual clearness, and which is essential to the constructive theologian of the present day. Similar considerations will apply to the theory of ecclesiastical life. In practical affairs experience is confessedly of the first importance, and we must know the methods of action which have been adopted in the past, and inquire into the causes of their success or failure, if we would lay down a system of judicious rules for the practice of the future. We must add in this connection that, if we want to act beneficially upon the Christendom around us, we must first of all endeavour to understand it; and we can understand it only when we know whence and how it came, and have patiently disentangled the lines which unite it to a far distant past. These remarks may suffice to establish the position of ecclesiastical history in the circle of theological studies.

We must now seek to define more precisely the scope and method of a history of the Church. We can imagine a kind of Christianity existing and acting upon the world without any ecclesiastical embodiment. As a special form of spiritual life it might spread by its native energy from soul to soul, and gradually leaven the whole mass of society, without counting its adher-

ents or marshalling them into a great host under an acknowledged system of government. But, as we have already remarked, a different plan was followed, and the establishment of the divine kingdom was not entrusted to the uncertain efforts of scattered individuals. Without discussing whether Christ formally constituted the Church or not, we may safely say that, in any case, it sprang out of the profound necessities of the Christian spirit, and was shaped by its creative and organising power. Not only were the believers drawn to one another by their mutual sympathy, their desire for common worship, and their need of the strength which is derived from association, but, finding themselves a small band in the midst of a hostile world, they were compelled to close their ranks, to trust their leaders, and present a united front to the enemy. In doing this they inevitably adopted a constitution and a ritual, and brought the ecstatic visions of faith down into the light of reflective thought; in other words, they became a Church, which was the public organ of Christianity, and stood over against the State as the representative of a new authority in the affairs of men. We may, then, without trenching on any disputed dogma, regard the Church as ideally the collective, organised, and self-conscious expression of the Christian life.

It follows from these remarks that Ecclesiastical History may be spoken of in a broader and a narrower sense. In its more restricted meaning it would confine itself to the organism known distinctively as the Church,

and would relate only what issued from or directly concerned its corporate existence. But in its wider bearings it must include in addition all that portion of the moral and religious life of Christians which lies outside of the ecclesiastical boundary. The history which is to serve our purpose, and describe the Christian religion in all the fulness of its activity, must accept this larger scope. Christianity, so far as it can present itself to the eye of the historian, is an expression (more or less imperfect) of the Christ-life in humanity; and wheresoever and howsoever that life may put forth a genuine manifestation, whether in formal connection with the Church or not, provided always that it be of sufficient importance to attract public attention, a history which desires to exhibit the religion in all the extent and variety of its power must take it into account. For instance, the labours of a philanthropist who, uncommissioned by any church, acted out of the Christian enthusiasm of his own heart, ought not to be omitted. We may even go further, and say that the Church may conceivably betray its true function and act in an unchristian spirit, while the State, likewise composed of Christian men, but under the influence of a less artificial conscience, becomes for the time the real representative of Christ. Thus a statesman who from a sense of justice and a belief in the impartial rule of God, which have been quickened and exalted by his faith in Christ, passes some great measure of social reform, is more like the Saviour than the ecclesiastics who in the olden time

hunted their fellow-men to death. If, then, we confined our history to the Church in its corporate capacity, although we should witness some of the grandest scenes in the Christian drama, we should nevertheless obtain a one-sided and imperfect view; but by enlarging it so as to embrace the moral and religious life of the members of the Church, acting not as churchmen, but simply as Christians, we obtain glimpses into the freer and more spontaneous movements of Christianity, which are often its most sincere expression. By following this plan we shall save ourselves from two serious errors: we shall neither ascribe to Christianity every evil which we detect in the Church nor refuse to Christianity all the good that may exist independently or in spite of the Church. To take the most obvious example: when in a Christian nation the Church, through its authorised representatives, opposes a wise and merciful reform which the parliament sanctions, the latter reflects the prevailing Christian consciousness of the time. In such a case it would be most unjust to say that Christianity was adverse to the reform, when in reality it was the free force of the Christian spirit that rent the trammels of ecclesiasticism and embodied in law its own conceptions of social order. In these remarks I do not wish to prejudge any doctrine respecting the Church's authority, but would simply point out what appears to be the proper method for the historian, who, disregarding dogmas, must follow the rules of his own science, and by a complete and impartial review of

facts provide the material for our future doctrinal fabric.

The considerations which induce us to make our history more comprehensive likewise determine our general mode of treatment. In a subject which is so apt to be regarded from a sectarian point of view, the demand for impartiality is advanced with peculiar justice, and we may be tempted to secure this virtue by placing ourselves disdainfully above the strife of parties, and noting merely the outer facts without caring to penetrate their deeper springs. But in this way impartiality is purchased at too great a price. What we wish to see is the inner soul of Christianity as it breaks into manifestation through the words and deeds of distinguished men, and frames for itself a continuity of expression over different lands and through successive ages ; and if we have nothing but a record of events and dates, the spell of life is dissolved, and Christian history sinks into a barren heap of unmeaning and disconnected phenomena. It is the business of the historian not only to estimate critically the value of his authorities, and to state conscientiously every significant fact, but to exercise that far higher judgment which probes the secrets of the human heart, and discerns the spiritual and material forces which have directed the current of affairs. It is for him to pour life and reality into the transactions of the past, to convert the puppets of the chronicler into men with flesh and blood, and to weave the bewildering mass of

details into a connected and intelligible story. He must, then, seek for impartiality not by a sublime indifference, a cold imagination, or a contemptuous reason, which can know nothing of the tragic magnificence of human passion, but by the largeness of his sympathies, by an imaginative apprehension of thoughts and feelings and tendencies the most unlike his own, in a word, by a human (or shall I rather say a divine?) love to which every expression of our common nature is fascinating, which can admire while it dissents, and pity while it condemns. To disapprove is not necessarily to be unjust, though those of whom we disapprove may naturally ascribe our judgment to prejudice or malice. We need not heed such taunts so long as we sincerely endeavour to base our judgment upon sound principles. Through inevitable imperfections our views may be often contracted or erroneous; but if we study history in the spirit which I have indicated, we shall, in spite of errors, learn its noblest lessons; and among these not the least precious is a wise and patient tolerance, which honours all that is holiest and best in every sect, and waits hopefully for the dropping off of the carnal veil that dims it, and the coming of that unity of the Spirit in which our differences shall at length be merged.

Besides the possession of well-trained spiritual and mental gifts, the student of Ecclesiastical History who aspires to be an original investigator requires an acquaintance with some other branches of knowledge, which can be obtained only by sedulous labour. Some

of these have been referred to in a general way in speaking of the relation of theology to other learned pursuits, but it will be advantageous to give a brief summary of them here. In the foremost rank we must place the political history of the countries where Christianity has established itself; for the Church and the State have always affected one another. The Church itself gradually became a great political power, and through considerable periods the two rival authorities are so closely interwoven that their respective histories occupy a large territory in common. The history of the religions with which Christianity was brought into collision, and by which it was more or less influenced, and especially that of its formidable mediæval rival, Mohammedanism, is necessary to explain some of the most remarkable features and movements of the Church. The history of philosophy and science throws an indispensable light upon the early formulation and the subsequent changes of theological thought; and the history of art illustrates the structure and embellishment of places of worship as well as the æsthetic side of the ritual. Chronology is the handmaid of history, and the different modes of reckoning time, and the various eras adopted by different writers, must be familiar to one who would draw his information from original sources. Ecclesiastical geography has received a separate treatment from political, and follows the divisions of creed rather than of government, distinguishing the Christian from the non-Christian, and the various

Churches of Christendom from one another, and, finally, giving the subordinate ecclesiastical divisions of each communion. As a preparation for the study of documents, the first requisite is knowledge of the languages in which they are written. The name of Ecclesiastical Philology has been given specially to the study of ecclesiastical Greek and Latin, in which so large a proportion of historical and other documents are composed; but a wide acquaintance with the vernacular speech of the various Christian nations must obviously be added by the original investigator. This circle of auxiliary studies is closed by Diplomatics, a science which includes the deciphering and interpretation of ancient writings (such as diplomas, patents, charters, monuments), and the criteria for determining their date, genuineness, and credibility. Numismatics and Sphragistics may be regarded as subordinate branches of Diplomatics.

It is obvious that this vast range of learning cannot be acquired by every theological student, and even one who devotes his life to the study of ecclesiastical history will often have to accept on trust the results of other men's researches. To a large extent the materials must be collected and sifted by specialists, who will bring their favourite documents, and the grounds of their judgment upon them, before the learned world; and then these materials may be appropriated by the historian in conformity with his own judgment, and through his combining and constructive power built up

into a colossal fabric, in which every part will be seen in its due proportion and in its bearing on the strength and beauty of the whole. But though few of us can draw our knowledge of ecclesiastical history to any great extent from the original sources, and still fewer have the artistic power without which there may be a statement of facts but not a history, nevertheless, every diligent student may investigate some particular incident for himself, and endeavour to present his results in an attractive narrative; and it is most desirable that in this way he should cultivate his power of resorting to the ultimate authorities, and exercising his independent judgment upon them, and then reproducing his impressions in a form which will make them serviceable to others. He will thus acquire some practical acquaintance with the methods of the historian, and will consequently be less at the mercy of partial or ill-informed writers, and will regard with keener admiration and respect the varied qualities which have produced the great masterpieces of historical literature.

Ecclesiastical History, like Biblical Theology, falls into several divisions, though these divisions are determined by a very different principle from that which we applied in the last section. There the subjects formed a series of successive steps, by means of which every part of the field was progressively surveyed, and the aim with which we started was finally reached. Here, however, the entire subject is first reviewed in all its comprehensiveness, and then certain portions are selected

and detached for more minute consideration in a series, not of successive, but of co-ordinate treatises. Ecclesiastical history, according to our general use of that term, deals with the Church as a whole. It regards the manifold activities of the Christian life as the expressions of one interior principle, and the various aspects under which it is possible to group these activities as representing only different functions of the same undivided organism.<sup>1</sup> According to this conception it must not only describe the working of these functions in their isolation, depicting their growth to maturity, and judging how far they have realised their ideal or have fallen short of it through the imperfection of human instrumentality or the influence of alien forces, but it must view them in their mutual connection and interaction, blend their separate stories into a combined narrative, and thus exhibit, not the disjointed limbs of an anatomical specimen, but the harmonised beauty of a living body, expressing through every part the mandates of a hidden soul.

This requirement was certainly not satisfied by the old division into centuries, in which the material in each century was parcelled out under a number of formal headings. By such an artificial arrangement we may accumulate stores of knowledge, but cannot produce a history. The division into periods, indeed, possesses great advantages, because different times are marked by

<sup>1</sup> See Rothe, "Theol. Encyclopädie aus seinem Nachlasse herausgegeben von Hermann Ruppelius," Wittenberg, 1880, p. 77.

prevailing characteristics which ought to be observed and explained, and because there are always some phases of religious life which require separate treatment ; and it is necessary in these instances for the historian to return upon his steps, and place these omitted portions in their due relation to the circumstances of the age. But the periods should be determined, not by the number of years, but by some great event which marks an epoch in the history of Christianity. These epochs may be somewhat differently selected according to the judgment or the object of different writers ; but there are a few which stand out so prominently that no historian can refuse them a place in his scheme ; and, passing over minor divisions, we can hardly be wrong in defining by these fruitful occurrences the larger cycles of ecclesiastical history. First, there is the long period extending to the re-establishment of the Western Empire under Charlemagne (A.D. 800), during which Christianity developed itself under the influence of Græco-Roman civilisation. For nearly three hundred years of this period it was engaged in a struggle for existence, and had to encounter not only the spirit of the world, but the power of the State. This conflict was terminated by the successes of Constantine (A.D. 312), and Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. In the succeeding centuries the Church, having conquered the world, was exposed to more subtle evils from its friendship than it had ever experienced from its hostility ; and in re-action against

its seductions the ascetic ideal of virtue, which had already made its appearance, was quickly developed, and multitudes fled from the ordinary ways of men into the regulated life of the monastery. The removal of the imperial court to Constantinople began that division between East and West which enabled the Latin Church to unfold its independent life, and made it possible for the bishops of Rome gradually to assume political functions, and become the dominant power in Western Christendom. Coincident with this decline of Greek influence was the rise of another power which was destined to become a most important factor in the history of Europe. The vigorous and unspoiled life of Germany dashed in pieces the tottering edifice of the old Roman system, but yielded to the spell of Christianity, and finally submitted to the authority of the Papal chair. The great changes which had thus been slowly prepared were in effect, though not in all their extent, consummated when Charlemagne received the imperial crown from the hands of Leo III. The disruption of the empire was followed by the completion of that schism which had long been growing between the Eastern and Western Churches (A.D. 1054). Thenceforth Greek Christianity went upon its separate way, and, while the historian must not forget that it claims the allegiance of a considerable part of Christendom, his attention is more powerfully attracted by its energetic and aggressive rival. In the West the period extending from Charlemagne to the Reformation may

be described as that of Romano-German Catholicism. This name is suggestive of the conflict which permeated the Middle Ages, and led ultimately to the great revolt inaugurated by Luther. To a certain extent this conflict represents the difference between the Latin and Teutonic races. It displayed itself, not only in the antagonism between Papal and Imperial, or Papal and National authority, but in an opposition between an external and legal system, which asserted its power over the individual conscience and thought, and the freer movements of an interior life, which chafed against restrictions not sanctioned by private faith ; or, in other words, between ecclesiastical and spiritual life, which, though by no means mutually exclusive, are the expression of widely divergent tendencies. For a long time the Papal or ecclesiastical conception of Christianity gained an ever-increasing ascendency, and held aloft the idea of a divine order and authority amid the fierce agitations of a semi-barbarous age. This tendency culminated in Innocent III. (AD. 1198-1216). For a time the spell of his commanding spirit seemed unbroken, and the Papacy stood at the height of its power. But irresponsible power contains within itself the causes of decline, and at last the corruptions of the Papal administration called forth loud cries for a reform of the Church in its head and in its members. Meanwhile the sense of national dignity and independence had been growing ; humanistic culture began to create fresh standards of judgment and a craving for freer exercise of the rational

powers; and religious experiences arose which would not fit into the ecclesiastical mould, but contained within them the germs of a new theology. Thus the time was ripe for great changes when Luther made his appeal from the Church to the Bible. From that moment western Christendom has been divided into two great parties, Catholic and Protestant. Catholicism has entrenched itself more firmly than ever in a system of dogmas and ordinances, and in the unity of a strong and coherent organisation. Protestantism has broken up into a number of sects, especially among English-speaking nations, and has been slowly working out the logical results of the original movement, namely, the combination of spiritual intensity with intellectual freedom, and the maintenance of an ecclesiastical system which shall serve the highest purposes of religion without trenching on national or individual rights. This period may be subdivided for Continental Christianity by the peace of Westphalia (A.D. 1648), which terminated the Thirty Years' War, and secured to Protestantism a permanent political recognition. In England we should rather select the accession of William III., as closing the long conflict with Catholicism for supremacy in the counsels of the State. These, then, are the periods, this the vast movement, which Ecclesiastical History has to describe, so combining the multiplicity of its materials that we shall apprehend them in their unity, and witness the various phases of the Christian

spirit in their bearing on the collective life of Christendom.

Having thus viewed the history of the Church in its complex unity, we find it desirable to disengage the more important phases or functions of the Christian life for separate examination, not only in order to secure for them a more detailed treatment than suits the purpose of a general history, but that we may see them in their continuous exercise and development, and understand more clearly their intrinsic character and laws. With this object we may select the six following expressions of the Christian spirit:—1. Its expression as an organising principle, drawing men together into a unity which is governed by its own rules, and stands in defined relations towards other communities. This subject is treated in the Constitutional History of the Church. 2. Its expression as a power which impels the soul to worship, and to seek the satisfaction of its religious needs in a public ceremonial. This is illustrated in the History of the Ritual. 3. Its expression as a faith, which contains certain intellectual conceptions, and is therefore capable of being analysed and formulated into sharply-defined dogmas. We thus reach the History of Doctrines, under which must be included, as subordinate branches, Symbolics and Patristics. 4. Its expression as an ideal law of righteousness, yielding the History of Morals. 5. Its literary expression. 6. Its artistic expression. On each of these divisions we must make a few remarks.

1. *History of the Constitution of the Church.*—It is the business of this branch of history to exhibit in their proper consecution the usages and laws which affect the organisation of the Church. It must, in the first place, investigate the historical origin of the Church as a distinct community. In considering, next, the regulations by which this community was governed, it may begin with the congregation as the unit in the ecclesiastical system, and notice the division into clergy and laity, and the functions of the several officers. In this connection it must discuss the question whether sacerdotal power was originally ascribed to the clergy. In sending its glance further afield, and noticing the union among congregations of the same district, it will be brought into the presence of Episcopacy, and it must then trace the rise and progress of that institution till it reaches the Metropolitan, the Patriarch, and finally the Pope. In due course it must describe the arrangements of the Papal court, and the appointment and duties of Legates and Cardinals. It must, further, give an account of the deliberative and legislative action of the Church as exercised through Synods and Councils. This introduces the subject of canon-law, which must be treated in connection with political laws affecting the power of the Church. After the Reformation the Protestant Churches failed to establish any uniform system, and various constitutions were adopted under the influence of national or theological preferences. These may be considered under the heads of Episcopal, Consis-

torial, Presbyterian, Representative, and Congregational.

2. *History of the Ritual.*—This subject is often treated under the name of Christian Antiquities or Archæology—a designation which is objectionable for two reasons. It is vague, and naturally includes much more than the ritual; and it is accordingly made more or less comprehensive by different writers. Again, it is arbitrarily confined to the remote past, and, having there no natural limit, it is extended or contracted at pleasure. It generally embraces the first six centuries, sometimes stretches as far as the Reformation, while the editors of the “Dictionary of Christian Antiquities” have chosen the reign of Charlemagne as their boundary. The subject itself, however, reaches to the present time; for, to urge only one consideration, all the Protestant Churches have departed from the Roman ritual, and we cannot neglect their varying forms of service if we wish to obtain a complete picture of Christian devotion. Although it may be convenient, then, to devote a separate treatise to the first few centuries or to any other period, yet such a treatise can only be accepted as part of a more comprehensive plan, and cannot be allowed a distinct place in our scheme of theological study.

The history of the ritual classifies its material under three heads. First, it considers sacred *places*, the oratory, the church, the cathedral, their structure and embellishment, and the various apparatus which they contain for

the conduct of public worship. As many of these objects must again engage our attention in the history of Christian art, we must here dwell rather on their ecclesiastical uses than on their artistic beauty and expressiveness. Secondly, it treats of sacred *seasons*, including not only Sundays, but all the divisions of the ecclesiastical year. Lastly, it takes up the services of the Church—the mode of celebrating public worship, reading of the Scriptures, singing, prayer, preaching, the administration of the sacraments. These three branches of the subject are so closely connected that it is desirable to group them in periods, so that at each stage of the Church's growth we may obtain a full representation of its devotional life. The periods must be the same as those adopted by general ecclesiastical history; for the development and changes of the ritual are largely dependent on the current of affairs, and do not provide us with epochs different from those which affect so deeply the external fortunes of the Church.

3. *History of Doctrines*.—Our object in this study is to comprehend historically the expression of Christian faith in forms of the understanding, and this object must determine the limits and method of our pursuit. Had a complete system of theology been given to the Church once for all, and remained unaltered ever since, there would be no history of doctrines, but our quest would be satisfied by the perusal of the New Testament. In reality, however, theology arose out of the exercise of

the intellect upon the contents of that spiritual faith which it was possible for simple minds to hold without analysing its meaning or seeking for the rational grounds on which it might be made to rest. The several doctrines of the Church, accordingly, were formulated only by degrees; and not till this work was accomplished was it possible to examine them in their mutual relations and arrange them in their proper order of dependence, and thus combine them at last into a finished system. During this process the Church was not only brought into collision with extraneous modes of thought, but had to encounter within its own borders varieties of opinion which it overruled as either altogether alien to Christian faith or as extreme and one-sided manifestations of one of its genuine tendencies. At the time of the Reformation the decisions of the Church itself were challenged on such an extensive scale that the various Protestant communions arose, each resting on a dogmatic basis which claimed to be the most correct embodiment of the primitive revelation. Naturally these less authoritative statements have not remained unquestioned. In our own day they are under a keen scrutiny; and by many who still desire to remain true to the Christian foundation the position has been reached that doctrine, since it derives its substance from spiritual apprehension and its form from intellectual elaboration, must necessarily vary with the ripening Christian experience and the expanding knowledge of successive ages, and that it is only through the acknowledgment of this law that it

can maintain the living and kindling power of truth. Such, then, is the great cycle of thought which the history of doctrines has to describe. It must not confine itself to Catholic dogma or to the Confessions of the Protestant sects, but must explore the recesses of heresy, and notice even non-Christian systems so far as their antagonism or their suggestiveness has affected the development of Christian doctrine; and it must discuss not only the growth and modifications of isolated dogmas, but the formation and decay of theological systems.

In the prosecution of this task it is not sufficient to give a bald statement of opinions, and mention the date when they were fixed in their ecclesiastical form. Thought grows by its own organic laws, and often requires centuries for the full unfolding of its tendencies; and though it always exercises a selective power among the materials presented to it, yet, like a tree exposed to sunshine or storm, it is modified by the influences around it. We must therefore endeavour to trace every opinion up to its seminal principle, to watch its logical self-evolution, and to view it in connection with the knowledge and circumstances of the time in which it prevailed. Only thus can we penetrate the secrets of the human mind, and convert what else might seem like barren speculations into revealing utterances of the profound faith, the eager aspiration, the force and subtlety of intellect, by which, not one or two individuals, but successive generations were swayed. We have not

attained our object till we have reached the heart of every dogma, and understand why it was shaped so and not otherwise, and, forsaking our own centre, can dwell with loving and appreciative interest upon modes of belief, and intellectual and spiritual tendencies, the most remote from those which characterise ourselves. Pursued in this manner, the study affords us revelations of the deep things in man, which are denied to the empty sneer of superior enlightenment. It not only provides us with valuable information and materials of thought, but widens the compass of our minds and our hearts, and brings us into the nearer presence of those permanent realities of the Spirit which abide the same beneath the shifting forms of knowledge.

These remarks will show the propriety of the division which is usually observed into General and Special History of Doctrines. It is the province of a general history to review the prevailing characteristics of the time, to estimate its intellectual and religious position, to mark off the interests which most urgently claimed attention and the problems which pressed for solution, and to refer to the principal writers on theological subjects. These are all matters which affect every doctrine alike; and without this preliminary knowledge it is impossible to group the individual doctrines in their true subordination, and to understand them as members of the living organism of thought. The special history takes up the doctrines one by one, and follows their isolated development. In doing so it must arrange them

in a proper order, and this order ought to be historical rather than logical. If this study were to be merely subservient to dogmatics, we might adopt the divisions of a modern treatise on systematic theology; but as it is our primary object to view the doctrines in their historical relations, it will be best to place in the foremost rank that doctrine or collection of doctrines which, as it were, dominated each age, and to dispose the rest, as far as possible, in accordance with the nearness or the remoteness of their connection with this master-thought. For it will be found that the theological colour, so to speak, of any particular time depends not only on the presence or absence of certain doctrines, but on the mutual proportions of those that are present, and changes while now one and now another emerges into prominence. For instance, at one time ecclesiastical interest is concentrated on the person of Christ, at another on the nature of the Holy Spirit, again on anthropology, or, once more, on the authority of the Church; and such great questions rearrange the lines of controversy, and alter, if not the dogmatic forms which have been accepted on other subjects, at least the effect which they exercise on the mind. Thus, in each period, the general history must prepare the way for and determine the distribution of topics in the special.

I have here assumed that a division into periods must be observed, and it is evident that without such a division the principles of treatment which I have sketched could not be carried out. We must, however,

no longer assume the periods which we have chosen in the more general treatment of ecclesiastical history ; for there we were guided by those great crises of affairs which, though leaving no part of the Church's life untouched, affected most obviously its external relations ; but here we take as our clue those events which mark an epoch in the changes of thought, and we characterise our periods by the tendencies prevailingly manifest in the construction or defence of doctrines. A different class of men now demands our attention : Constantine retreats before Athanasius ; the metaphysics of Anselm and the dialectics of Abélard attract us more than the lofty pretensions of Innocent III. It is only in the Reformation that the two modes of allotting our periods completely coincide ; and they do so there because that great revolution, which clove the Church asunder and affected so deeply the policy of nations, sprang ultimately from changes of religious conception, which were brought to a focus in the commanding soul of Luther.

Following, then, the clue which is thus afforded, we extend our first period to the time of Gregory the Great, the close of the sixth century. During this period Christianity was animated by the creative energy of youth, and found expression for the new religious consciousness, first in single doctrines and brief summaries of the most essential points of belief, and at last in the complete system of ecclesiastical dogma which ruled with its inviolable authority the mind of the Middle Ages. We may divide this long period by the Council

of Nicæa, which made the first attempt to enunciate the contents of the Christian faith by the collective voice of the entire Church, and thus define with an unimpeachable sanction what Christians were bound to believe. The first of these minor periods we may call the Apologetic, because the theological activity of the Church was principally engaged in a defence against the attacks of Judaism, heathenism, and heresy. The second is the Systematic-polemic period (so called by Neander), during which Christianity shaped amid internal controversies the system of mediæval theology. A period of comparative stagnation naturally followed. The authority of the Church was now paramount in the domain of thought, and her energies were chiefly directed to the conversion of nations and the assertion of her own supremacy in everything which affected the social welfare. This period of transition lasted till the time of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom Scholasticism properly began. It was the aim of Scholasticism, accepting with unquestioning faith the dogmatic decisions of the Church, to exhibit the harmony between these and the fundamental facts of man's intellectual and spiritual nature. In this attempt it failed to give universal satisfaction, and thus helped to prepare the way for the rejection of those dogmas the truth of which it had assumed as the very basis of its reasoning. The scholastic period, therefore, though it still continues in the Catholic Church, was succeeded by the Protestant period, which was ushered in by the Reformation, and

has lasted to our own time. Protestantism, obliged to define its position and entrench itself against Catholicism, fell into a dogmatic orthodoxy as rigid and exclusive as that of the older Church, and we may place by itself the not very clearly defined period during which this spirit was paramount. In the eighteenth century the principle of religious liberty, which was involved in the Protestant movement, began to assert itself with greater distinctness, and, refusing to be identified with the Deistical revolt against Christianity, claimed its place within the bosom of the Church itself. The struggle of this principle of freedom marks the last period of the history of doctrines, in the midst of which we ourselves live.

There are two subjects which necessarily enter into a history of doctrines, but which cannot receive in a work of such large scope that completeness and continuity of treatment to which their importance entitles them. Hence arise two branches of study which, though they must be classed under our present head, command a separate investigation, namely, Symbolics and Patristics.

(a.) *Symbolics*.—The word *σύμβολα* properly denoted the two halves of a bone or a ring which were broken off from one another, and kept as vouchers by two contracting parties. Hence it easily passed to the signification of a pledge or voucher generally, and was applied to the watchword by which the soldiers of the same army or the members of any other association were recognised by their fellows. It was only a slight extension of this last meaning when it was used to denote the

formula of belief by the acceptance of which Christians were separated from the non-Christian world, or, within the Church itself, the members of different parties were distinguished from one another.

The necessity for some confession of faith must have arisen as soon as converts began to be received, through the rite of baptism, into the fellowship of the Church. At first this confession was, as we learn from *Acts*, of the simplest kind ; but it was gradually enlarged by the addition of successive clauses till it assumed the form which is known as the *Symbolum Apostolicum*. The great Trinitarian controversy called for a further and more precise definition of the Catholic faith, and this was provided by the Councils of *Nicæa* (A.D. 325) and of *Constantinople* (A.D. 381) in what is usually termed the *Nicene Creed*. A yet more stringent definition of the doctrine of the Trinity was subsequently given in the *Symbolum Quicunque vult*, wrongly ascribed to *Athanasius*. These three creeds, being acknowledged by several, though not by all, parties in Christendom, are distinguished as the *Ecumenical Symbols*.

The opinions against which the *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds were directed failed to make any deep impression on the future history of the Church. *Arianism*, though for a time a formidable rival of orthodoxy, died away, and its *Symbol* has only an antiquarian interest. Other heretical views which arose in the progress of the controversy retreated to the East, where they still maintain a feeble existence in the sects of *Nestorians*.

or Dyophysites, Jacobites or Monophysites, and Maronites or Monothelites. A difference of opinion regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, however, contributed its share to the great division between the Eastern and Western Churches, the former refusing to adopt *Filioque* in the clause of the Nicene Creed relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Greek Church is thus doctrinally separated from the Roman, and it has of course never adopted the more recent Symbols of the latter. Its own theology is summarised in two Confessions which are generally regarded as authoritative : 'Ορθόδοξος ὁμολογία τῆς καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἀνατολικῆς, composed by Peter Mogilas (Metropolitan of Kiev in the south of Russia) in 1642, approved by the Church at Constantinople, and subscribed by its Patriarch, as well as the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, in 1643, and again ratified by a Synod at Jerusalem in 1672 ; and Gennadii Confessio, 'Ομιλία περὶ τῆς ὁρθῆς καὶ ἀληθοῦς πίστεως τῶν Χριστιανῶν, which was prepared for the Sultan Mohammed II., after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, A.D. 1453. The Longer Catechism, of 1839, has the approval of "the most holy governing Synod ;" and a few other minor authorities may be consulted.<sup>1</sup>

The disruption of Western Christendom which took

<sup>1</sup> They are enumerated in Winer's "Comparative Darstellung des Lehrbegriffs der verschiedenen christlichen Kirchenpartheien, nebst vollständigen Belegen aus den symbolischen Schriften derselben in der Ursprache." Leipzig, 1824 ; 2d ed. 1837 ; 3d, by Preuss, 1866 ; 4th, by Dr. Paul Ewald, 1882. See also Dr. Schaff's "History of the Creeds of Christendom."

place at the Reformation compelled the Roman Church to define its position anew in relation to the tenets of Protestantism. It did so in the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545-1563), and the *Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini* are still the standard of Roman Catholic theology, though we must now add to these the definitions of the Vatican Council of 1870 and statements of doctrine issued with the requisite Papal authority. The *Professio fidei Tridentinæ* of 1564 and the *Catechismus Romanus* published in 1566 likewise received Papal sanction ; but the authority of the latter has been sometimes disputed by Catholic theologians. The Reformers were forced at a still earlier time to draw up a public declaration of their belief. Among the followers of Luther this task was entrusted to Melanchthon, and the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology* (A.D. 1530) became the accepted Symbols of the Lutheran Church. At a later time the *Articles of Schmalkald* (1537) and the *Formula of Concord* (1577-9) were added. Luther's *Larger* and *Smaller Catechisms* (1529) also have dogmatic authority. These various creeds, together with the *Œcumical Symbols*, were incorporated in the *Concordienbuch*, which was published in German at Dresden in 1580, and became, as Hase says,<sup>1</sup> the *Magna Charta of German Lutheranism*. The Reformed or Calvinistic Church never succeeded in attaining the same unity as the Lutheran ; and it has consequently no Symbol of universal obligation. Instead of this it

<sup>1</sup> "Kirchengeschichte," Sec. 343.

presents a large number of Confessions, which never enjoyed more than a local authority. It will be sufficient here to indicate their variety by naming the more important. The earliest are the *Confessio Tetrapolitana* (agreed upon by the Reformers of Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau), and Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio*, presented to the Diet at Augsburg in 1530. These were succeeded by the *Confessio Basileensis* (1534), *Confessio Helvetica I.* (1536) and *II.* (1566), *Confessio Gallicana* (1559), *Confessio Belgica* (1562, revised and ratified by the Synod of Dort, 1619), the *Catechismus Heidelbergensis* (1563, translated into many languages, and sanctioned by the Synod of Dort in 1619), and finally the decisions of the Synod of Dort on the five points of doctrine which were the subject of controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians or Remonstrants. In our own country the fullest expression of Calvinistic theology is given in the *Westminster Confession*, drawn up by the *Assembly of Divines* which was summoned by Parliament to meet at Westminster, and held its first session in December 1643. The *Confession* was approved by the *General Assembly* of the Church of Scotland in 1647, and ratified by *Acts of Parliament* in 1649 and 1690. The *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, prepared under the same auspices, have likewise symbolical authority, having been approved by the *General Assembly* in 1648. The theology of the Church of England, as expressed in the *Thirty-nine Articles* (ratified in 1571), belongs essentially to the

same school, though it is less rigorously defined. We need not dwell upon the minor or later sects, some of which do not even possess a Symbol, but leave their theology to be gathered from more or less representative writings. Enough has been said to show in a general way how symbolical literature has arisen, and how rich and varied is the material which awaits us in this department of study.

The purpose of Symbolics is to bring together all the needful information respecting the origin and contents of the Symbols recognised by the various parties in the Christian Church. The study arose in the first instance out of a twofold necessity. On the one hand, an historical introduction to the Symbols and an exposition of their contents were required by those who acknowledged their authority; and, on the other hand, they had to be defended against the assaults of those who professed a different creed, and taken as a starting-point for conducting an attack upon the enemy's territory. In a scientific theology the polemical spirit must yield to the historical and sympathetic, and confessions of faith from which we most dissent must be treated with justice, and the underlying principles which made them acceptable to thoughtful and religious men must be exhibited in their most favourable light, and their defects criticised with candour and gentleness.

Our subject falls into four divisions. First must come an historical introduction, giving an account of the origin of the different Symbols and of their acceptance

by the Church or any of its sects. The second division is exegetical, dealing with the text of the Symbols, and accompanying it with a commentary to explain and illustrate it. The order in which this work is conducted may be decided partly on chronological grounds, and partly by the relative importance of the several Churches and Symbols. We next proceed to the systematic portion of our task, which, when any Church has a plurality of Symbols, combines these into one theological system. And lastly, we treat the subject comparatively, and draw forth into distinct expression the points of agreement and difference between the various parties, both in their comprehensive principles and in their separate dogmas. We thus obtain a complete view of the established and authoritative theology of Christendom. But we must remember that this view is strictly historical. The Symbols could not stop for ever the progress of human thought, and in scarcely any Church, if even in one, is the spiritual complexion of men's minds precisely what it was in the age when its dogmas were formulated; so that to know the living theology in the midst of which we dwell we must repair to other sources of information than those venerable and partly worn-out creeds to which the Churches still professedly adhere.

(b.) *Patristics*.—The name of Fathers (*patres ecclesiae*) has been given to those men who, in the earlier ages of the Church, had the most conspicuous influence on its development, and whose writings contributed most to

the establishment of the ecclesiastical system of doctrine. Those who were believed to have been associated with the Apostles, namely Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias, are distinguished as Apostolical Fathers. The honourable title of Fathers is confined by the Church to writers of unimpeachable orthodoxy, while men, like the noble Origen, who rendered the greatest services to Christianity, but were suspected of heterodox opinions, receive the lower name of *Scriptores ecclesiastici*. The testimony of the earliest writers is necessarily of great value in an inquiry into the primitive forms of Christian belief, and the men who at a later time secured the triumph of the accepted dogmas are naturally looked up to as the spokesmen of the Church itself, so that it is not wonderful that a dogmatic authority came to be attached to the *consensus patrum*. This circumstance inevitably led to a divergence of opinion between Catholics and Protestants as to the limits of the patristic period. The Catholic theologians bring it down to the thirteenth century, though they distinguish the scholastic writers by the inferior, if still exalted, name of *Doctores ecclesiæ*. The Protestants, who rejected the mediæval development of theology as Papal corruption, stopped short with Gregory the Great at the close of the sixth century. To the freer thought of a later time, however, both these limitations appear equally arbitrary. There is no reason why we should ascribe authority to a writer in the sixth or the thirteenth century, and refuse it to a writer of equal

devoutness and ability in the seventh or the fourteenth ; and the study which has become familiar under the name of Patristics extends itself, when logically conceived, so as to embrace the leading theological thinkers of every age. Whether we accept this enlarged range or prefer either of the narrower limits, the object of our inquiry, in regard to particular authors, remains the same : we wish to become acquainted with the minds which have forged the successive links in the vast chain of Christian thought, to survey them in their individuality, to watch the stages of their growth, to learn the characteristics of their influence, the literary flavour of their writings, and the distinguishing features of their system of belief. The preponderance might be given to any of these various sides of our subject, and the interest made to centre in biography (a treatment which is sometimes distinguished as Patrology) or in literature, as well as in thought ; but the last, if worthily handled, receives most valuable light from the others, and displays theological ideas in the process of formation amid the ardours of religious sensibility and experience, and as wrung from the inmost life of original and powerful minds. We find here the chief attraction of this study ; and it is for this reason that we class it under the history of doctrines, to whose colder and more abstract page it imparts the glow of human passion and aspiration.

4. *History of Morals.*—Christianity, as a principle of

spiritual life, necessarily constructed a code of morals founded upon religious conceptions. Whenever it took possession of a soul, it asked not only for newness of belief, but for a change in the outward habits; and when it was embraced by communities and nations, its ethical force found expression in customs and in laws. These facts constitute the basis of a history of Christian morals, of which it is consequently the object to exhibit the ethical influence of Christianity in the various phases of human life.

In the accomplishment of this object there is a source of difficulty and error which requires vigilance and discernment on the part of the historian. It is not sufficient to describe the morals of Christendom, but we must always discriminate the Christian from the non-Christian element. We know that at the present day multitudes of professing Christians never attempt to make the law of Christ the standard of their lives, and never think of obeying it when it transcends the worldly average. We know, too, how men who are sincere and earnest in their profession are often blinded by prejudice and habit, and extort from the pages of the New Testament a sanction for practices which are opposed to the whole spirit of the Gospel. And so it has always been. The ideal morals of Christianity were thrown as leaven into the dull mass of human selfishness and passion, and were oppressed by the weight of inherited habits, and by national manners and laws which had the support of immemorial usage; and what we want to trace is the

influence of Christianity, not only in founding new institutions, but in modifying and bringing into nearer conformity with its own ideal the ancient practices of mankind. To take an example: Christianity is not responsible for the existence of war, for this has existed all over the world from pre-Christian times; but the presence of loving women in the military hospital, the more humane treatment of prisoners, the growing respect for private property, the comparative safety of women and children in the neighbourhood of a hostile army, and other improvements by which the barbarity of war is mollified, may be fairly ascribed to that great sacrifice of love which is the type of all genuine Christian ethics. So, again, Christianity was not the inventor of slavery; and whatever may have been the prevailing action of the Church, we recognise the real spirit of the religion, not in riveting the manacles of the slave, but in opening men's eyes from stupor, and casting off at length this deadly incubus. Thus the history of Christian morals has a twofold task: it must first delineate the moral condition of Christendom, and then it must distinguish the share which justly belongs to Christianity as one of the many influences by which this condition was produced.

In pursuing this subject we may conveniently adopt the same division into periods as in ecclesiastical history; for ethical epochs naturally coincide with those which affect the general life of the Church. In each division we should consider first the prevalent ethical

colouring of the period, and the conditions under which Christian morality had to display itself. Proceeding thence to details, we may notice, first, the influence of Christianity on individual character, in regard, for instance, to purity, temperance, self-denial, courage, gentleness, truthfulness. We may then take up social ethics, and deal with such topics as marriage and family life, education, social intercourse, public amusements, trade and manufactures, government and legislation. We must, lastly, take a wider outlook over international relations, war, treaties, commerce. There is here a vast field for interesting and fruitful inquiry, an inquiry which would present to us with a new vividness the secret springs of Christian life, and the tendencies in human nature which resist its ameliorating power.

5. *History of Literature.*—When Christianity first sought for literary expression in the classical languages of Greece and Rome, these languages had already passed the flower of their age, and even religious enthusiasm could not restore their vitality, and make them speak once more in their lost purity and grace. Indeed, the new religion, by the very energy of its creative force, requiring fresh terms or using old terms in unaccustomed meanings, rather tended to corrupt them; and for a long period men were too intent upon the thought itself to care much for the perfection of its form. Hence for many centuries Christianity produced

no work which has lived by the mere power of its literary merit. Still, even while Greek and Latin continued to be its principal vehicles of expression, it created many new kinds of literature, not only the unique writings of the New Testament and at a later time their spurious counterparts, but apologies and controversial works, expositions of the Christian faith, and commentaries on the Scriptures, sermons, hymns, acts of martyrs, lives of the saints. History and poetry also claimed attention, though they had to wait long before they could take their place beside the immortal productions of ancient genius. But at last Latin died away, to rise in the young vigour of new-born languages, and the Teutonic dialects became conscious of their old and native strength. The adoption of the vernacular speech for the embodiment of religious ideas and emotions affected the whole future of Western Christendom, and enabled Christianity at last to clothe its lofty conceptions in the finest literary forms. In this process the translations of the Scriptures into modern languages had no unimportant share. This brief statement will show that there is room for a history of Christian literature as distinguished from a general history of the literature of Christendom, and that without it we must fail to appreciate one of the most interesting aspects of Christianity. This history must not only describe with critical art the representatives of the various kinds of literature which come under its view, but it must estimate the influence of

Christianity in determining their literary quality; and in regard to the immense stores of literature which, in the later centuries, lie outside its range, it must consider whether the Christian spirit has not exercised an indirect influence, and imposed rules even where it has not furnished the inspiration.

In the arrangement of our materials we may as well follow the periods of ecclesiastical history, except that in the Middle Ages we must substitute Dante (1265-1321) for Innocent III.; for the "Divina Commedia," which appeared after his death, marks a literary epoch, not only on account of the grandeur of its poetry, but because it is the first supreme work in a modern language. Under each period we must dispose the various kinds of literature in the order of their importance, giving the preference to those which are most characteristic, religiously considered, of the times in which they were produced.

6. *History of Art.*—In art, as in literature, Christianity stepped into the inheritance of a decaying civilisation, and for a long period could aim at nothing more original than the adaptations of ancient models to her own purposes. The necessity for a separate building in which to celebrate the public offices of religion must have been soon felt; and as Christianity extended her empire, churches and cathedrals arose in every part of Europe, and became the most conspicuous monuments of her artistic skill. It was in connection with

the sacred edifices, where all the devotion of the people found its congenial home, that the other arts—sculpture, painting, and music—were, at least in the early and middle ages, most sedulously cultivated, so that, though there is no precise coincidence in the advances made by the several arts, we may select architecture to define by its changes the periods into which our history must be divided. These are entirely different from any which we have hitherto adopted, and not always capable of very exact boundaries. First comes the Roman period, in which the oblong form of the *Basilica*, or in the case of sepulchres and memorial churches the circular form of the Roman tomb, was adopted as the model. This lasted till the reign of Justinian (accession 527, death 565). The magnificent church of St. Sophia, built in the earlier part of this reign, and restored after injury by an earthquake towards its close, inaugurated the Byzantine architecture, distinguished by its approach to the square or octagonal shape and its central dome. This became the type of Oriental churches, and was not without influence in the West. About the same time Roman architecture began to experience that modification of style which is known as Romanesque, distinguished by the abundant use of the arch, for the purposes not only of support but of ornament. The Romanesque, with its principal branches, Lombard and Norman, prevailed until Christianity created for itself a new style, and in the latter part of the twelfth century Gothic architecture, with its endless application of the

pointed arch, sprang into a sudden grandeur. The impulse which induced the architects to cast off the trammels of ancient tradition affected in the next century the painters of Italy; and, if we except the remarkable developments of music in more recent times, we must regard this great awakening of independent genius as the last epoch in the history of Christian art.

Such, then, are the various phases of the Christian life which the historian of the Church has to describe. We have still to notice one other subject, which is not so much a department of ecclesiastical history as an appendix. It is that which is known under the name of Statistics.

*Ecclesiastical Statistics.*—This branch of theological study was introduced by Schleiermacher,<sup>1</sup> and has for its object to describe the present condition of Christendom. Its method may, indeed, be applied at any point in the history of the Church, and it is useful for the historian to furnish, in connection with the several epochs, a *résumé* of ecclesiastical affairs, so as to render succeeding events more easily intelligible; but its aim is to give the student a knowledge of his own time, and thereby place him in a better position for dealing with the questions of practical theology. In the present divided state of Christendom it must take up the various churches and sects one by one, as has already

<sup>1</sup> See Räbiger, p. 448.

been done in Symbolics. This division into so many antagonistic parties is itself a fundamental fact of large significance, and one which ought to be brought out into clear light in connection with the characteristics of different countries and races, and with the dominant spirit of ecclesiastical government. In regard to each Church, information must be given on such points as its geographical extension and the numbers of its adherents; its constitution, and relation to the State; the education, social position, and power of its clergy or ministers, and the obligations which rest upon them; the mode of worship; the general condition of morals and culture; missionary activity at home and abroad. After this detailed survey a picture must be drawn of Christendom as a whole. The various parts of the world where Christianity is to be found must be enumerated, and Christian nations compared with the non-Christian. Those features of the religion which acknowledge no sectarian limits must be selected for notice, and contrasted tendencies of thought or of sentiment which appear within the confines of the same Church, and require another mode of classification than that furnished by the creeds, must be observed, and their relative force at the present time carefully estimated. Through such a study, coming as the close of all our historical pursuits, we shall know the Christendom in which our lot is cast, and be the better prepared to take up the duties which devolve on the theologian as a teacher of men.

## SECTION V.

*Systematic Theology.*

We have now completed our historical inquiries, and surveyed the action of the religious principle—first as manifested in the various religions of mankind, and then, with greater detail, in the forms of Jewish and Christian faith. Before entering upon this subject we satisfied ourselves that there is an eternal Reality upon whom the veneration of men may fitly rest, and that therefore beneath all the varieties of religion there is an underlying truth which they endeavour to express. We had not, however, proceeded far upon our way before we became aware that the representations of this truth were not always accordant, and the worship which at first seemed to arise universally from the human heart, and to be the pledge of continual advancement towards an ideal goal, was disturbed by the fierce din of controversy, and often served chiefly to add intensity to brutal and unholy passions. Hence it is evident that most religions have a large commingling of error, and that we must subject both the belief and the practice of religion to a thorough investigation before we can acquiesce in any of the forms which it has hitherto assumed. Towards this procedure, at once critical and constructive, all our previous studies have been leading us; and our next attempt must be to frame a theory of religious

faith and practice which will at the same time express the highest spiritual experiences of our race and satisfy the intellectual and scientific demands of the present day. This is the task of Systematic Theology.

The object, then, of the present branch of theology may, I conceive, be thus defined: it is to ascertain religious truth, and present it in a properly arranged and harmonious system, rationally established as a whole and in its parts.

As this definition differs from that which is usually given, a few words must be said in its explanation and defence. It is generally assumed that the doctrines of Systematic Theology have not to be ascertained, but are already given, substantially, if not formally, in the Christian religion, and that nothing remains but to draw forth the contents of the Church's faith, clothe them with precision of statement, and frame them into a logically articulated system. Thus Hagenbach defines our present study as the methodical and connected exposition of Christian doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Some would even restrict it to the dogmas of the particular Church to which the theologian may happen to belong, while those who take the broadest view admit only such modifications of sectarian dogmas as may arise from an outlook over the entire field of Christian faith. Now this is a limitation which, as it seems to me, is not involved in the nature of the subject itself, and which we

<sup>1</sup> "Die wissenschaftliche zusammenhängende Darstellung der christlichen Lehre," Sec. 79.

have therefore no right to assume at starting. What we want is the possession of religious truth, a strong mental grasp of realities, on which we can trustfully rest, and which we can loyally accept as the guide of our lives; and it is only on the presumption that the dogmas of our sect represent such realities that we can adopt them as the basis of our system. If we do not believe them, the whole process becomes an empty logical game, in which we trick out with spurious garments of truth the exploded ideas of the past. If we do believe them, we value them on account of their truth, and it is only as a statement of truth that we ought to be anxious to set forth our theological code. It is apparent, then, that our ultimate aim is religious truth; and even if in the course of our inquiry we should be convinced that our inherited dogmas and religious truth absolutely coincide, if with the Catholic we should be satisfied that what the Church has once pronounced is Divine and infallible, yet we must not lay down as a basis that which has to be established by argument. To do so can only leave upon the impartial mind a feeling of unreality, and a haunting fear that the foundations of the seemingly Divine temple will not bear to be examined.

The above determination of our object at once broadly distinguishes Systematic from Historical Theology. This distinction is not so clearly exhibited by the more generally received definition. If it be our object to set forth *Christian* doctrine, the words in themselves

suggest nothing but an historical problem ; and even if, as I believe, a true theology will be also a Christian theology, the word Christian does not imply this coincidence, and it brings to mind rather the current of world-wide events and developments than the present relations of exact thought. It is not as Christian, but as true, that the doctrines of Systematic Theology demand our attention. It was from a failure to observe this distinction, that Rothe (following Schleiermacher) was led to classify Systematic, or, as he preferred to call it, "Positive" Theology, under the head of historical studies. He was supported in this view by the etymological meaning of Dogmatics, a word which properly denotes the science of dogmas—that is, of ecclesiastically authorised propositions. The object of the science, accordingly, is, he contends, one which has an historical origin and is empirically prescribed, and can therefore be treated only under the historical division of theology.<sup>1</sup> Those who feel that this is unsatisfactory, and that there is really something which widely separates the historical from the systematic studies, appear to me to be perfectly correct in their instinctive thought; but I do not see how they can escape from the logical force of Rothe's argument so long as they limit the scope of their doctrinal investigations by a narrow definition. As soon, however, as we aim simply at the establishment of a true system of doctrine, whether that system

<sup>1</sup> "Theologische Ethik," 2d ed. 1869, p. 62; "Theolog. Encyclop." p. 100 *sq.*

should ultimately coincide or not with the dogmas of any particular Church, we quit the historical ground just as certainly as when we pass from the history of any physical science to the examination of its subject matter. In both instances history will supply us with information, and many a truth will be associated with some distinguished name; but our object nevertheless will be, not to bind into organic unity the isolated parts of some complex historical phenomenon, but to ascertain and exhibit in their rational connection the real facts of the universe.

The weakness of Rothe's position is conspicuous in the distinction which he draws between Dogmatics and Symbolics, which he co-ordinates as two of the independent branches of Positive Theology: in Dogmatics you set forth the dogmas of your own Church; in Symbolics or Comparative Dogmatics, you compare with these the dogmas of other Churches. This is a perfectly arbitrary distinction, and has no existence in the eye of abstract thought. It assumes that all the theological truth which is worth knowing is deposited in the historical formulæ of some particular Church, and does not even propose, as the initial stage of the science, to discover this true Church by a genuine process of inquiry, but deliberately leaves its selection to the accidents of birth and education. If you happen to belong to the wrong Church, you will have little chance of ever deserting it; for most men find their own type of piety essentially represented by the Church which

has shaped and nurtured that piety, and thus the very prejudices which the Church itself has fostered become the criteria of its truth. Nor does Rothe escape from this strange position by placing Speculative Theology in the forefront of his entire system; for, though he perceives that Speculative Theology must start from the individual religious consciousness, yet he contends that it necessarily presupposes an individual consciousness in which the common religious consciousness of the Church for the time being is definitely reflected, so that it finally results in agreement with the general conviction of the religious society to which it belongs.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the process of thought actually follows for the most part the line which is here laid down does not justify it as a theory of theological procedure; for it is the aim of science, not to intensify, but to discharge our misleading subjective impressions, and to conduct us towards objective truth. If theology can do nothing to rectify the partialities of our thought and experience, but can only cast the glamour of a spurious science over the creed which we chance to have inherited, it hardly deserves the attention of serious and truth-loving men.

This defective mode of classification, then, which is worked out by Rothe with such marked ability and consistency, appears to me, though it is not generally accepted, to flow consequentially from the definition of Systematic Theology which is usually given. The form

<sup>1</sup> "Theol. Encyc." pp. 22-23.

of the definition might seem to be a matter of merely verbal importance ; but it really affects the whole spirit and method of our inquiry. If it be our avowed and deliberate aim to produce an orderly exposition of Christian doctrine, whether in a broader or a narrower sense, we shall be biassed throughout our entire course, and shall be swayed by Biblical or ecclesiastical formulæ before these have established either the right or the manner of their control ; and the probability is that, thus placing ourselves under an authority accepted prior to investigation, we shall be timid in our search, and, failing to apprehend the loftiness and breadth of our declared aim, we shall fall far below the universality and fulness of the Christian spirit, and represent only one of its partial and distorted manifestations. In any case the outside world can never accept our statements as the pure result of independent thought. On the other hand, if our only aim be truth, the highest word which history or mankind around us or the Spirit in our own souls has to say to us will be open to our examination and acceptance ; we shall bring to our task hearts which are ever waiting for something larger, deeper, holier, than they have yet attained, and intellects which with chaste severity and calm critical power will decide according to the real weight of evidence ; and if, as a result of our labours, we embrace a spiritual Christianity which, while moulding the highest life of man, is itself plastic to the changing forms of an advancing culture, we shall not address it

to an unheeding world, for that which, however old, is freshly born out of the struggles of a soul with single eye and love too deep and rich for party limits, will never cease to fascinate.

The objection may be made that in this way each thinker is thrown back solely upon his own resources, which can never be so full and trustworthy as the authorised manifesto of a Church. But unless we lay down the doctrine that every one is to believe for ever the dogmas of the sect in which he was born—a doctrine which would be tantamount to a total despair of theological truth—we must acquiesce in this apparent disadvantage, and at least in the initial stage of our inquiry rely upon our own judgment alone. Even if there be some infallible standard of theology, yet we can accept this standard only by an act of purely personal conviction, and the momentous step by which we silence for ever the voice of our individual judgment in questions henceforth admitted to lie beyond its jurisdiction must itself be taken solely in deference to a prior decision of the individual judgment. But if, with most Protestants, we conclude that the formulæ of belief are not infallible, we cannot rationally suspend the free exercise of our private judgment, but are bound to apply it to every question as it comes before us. Nor will this course land us ultimately in the mere vagaries of individual incompetence. Wherever liberty prevails, incompetence will very probably make a few noisy demonstrations; but here, as elsewhere,

when it loses the artificial importance which it derives from attempts to suppress it, it will soon be measured and dismissed. On the other hand, men with the requisite powers of spirit and of thought would exercise their legitimate influence, and place theology in its just relation to the ever changing needs and attainments of society. The individual mind is not necessarily below the level of sectarian faith. The invisible and ideal Church of God is indeed larger than any man; but parties are apt to contract the sympathies, to bias the understanding, and to clip the wings of aspiration. Every wise man, when he starts upon his solitary track, will gather to himself an unseen communion of saints, and nourish his soul with mighty thoughts and devout meditations and prayers, which have been breathed from holy lips; yet, with humblest reverence, he will seek within him the verdict of the spirit and of reason, for it is there that God speaks to him his nearest word, and he dare not be guilty of high treason against the majesty of these supreme gifts to man. Thus, although upon a higher plain, Systematic Theology stands upon essentially the same basis of individual judgment as all other sciences. Its votary gratefully bows before minds more competent than his own, and freely appropriates truths which are part of the world's inheritance; and yet he regards the whole subject as theoretically open to revision, and applies to each doctrine the ripest judgment and the largest knowledge at his command. The future must declare whether

the converging thoughts of independent minds will ultimately lead to a grander consensus than the old methods of authority and repression, which have resulted chiefly in animosity and schism.

Is Systematic Theology, then, merely a scheme of speculative philosophy? The view which we have taken undoubtedly admits the possibility of this; but it does not necessitate it. The statement in our definition, that the system must be rationally established as a whole and in its parts, does not imply that reason is everywhere the sole and immediate source of religious conviction, but only that the use of every source which is adopted must be rationally justified; and that each doctrine, from whatever source it is derived, and however it may in itself transcend the unaided powers of the human mind, must be proved to rest in the last resort upon something which can be rationally accepted, and must be brought into its due relation with the results of experience and the laws of reason. In other words, Systematic Theology is throughout an exercise of thought upon the subjects of faith. But whether it be simply a scheme of speculative philosophy must depend upon the attitude assumed by each thinker. It will be so for every one who supposes that there is no ground for religious belief except in the speculative reason; but it will not be so for the much larger number who find the main sources of religious belief elsewhere. If any one is convinced that there is an infallible dogmatic standard, which has sprung, not from reason, but from

divine inspiration, his process of proof will be completed as soon as he has established the reality of the standard. His proof, if partly philosophical, will be partly historical ; and thenceforth he will abandon the path of speculation, except so far as he may find it necessary to rebut philosophical objections, and to show the consistency of dogmas with one another and with knowledge derived from other sources. Again, some thinker may hold that in the human mind itself the ground of religious faith lies, at least in part, outside of the speculative reason, and is found in a spiritual element which belongs to our being as essentially as reason itself. If so, he must philosophically justify this position, and endeavour to ascertain the laws of the religious spirit ; but having done so, he will interpret the religious consciousness as developed and illuminated by the experience of mankind, and thus bring in history to control and guide the course of speculation. This will be the case to a yet larger extent if he believes that a revelation in any special sense, even though not dogmatically infallible, has been given, for instance that the eternal light has shone forth with unexampled splendour in Christ, so that his spirit is a criterion of spiritual truth. Systematic Theology will then, while keeping its eyes open to all past and present facts, be chiefly occupied with the exposition and justification of an historical religion, and, using dogmas not as fetters, but as clues, search the deep things of God through the illuminating medium of a spirit whose richness and

beauty theology has never yet exhausted. Which of these several directions shall be taken must be decided, not by accidental preference, but by serious inquiry.

These remarks suggest the proper division for our subject. We must inquire first into the sources of theological doctrine, and then proceed, in the second place, to construct our doctrinal system. The latter falls naturally into two branches. In the first, Doctrinal Theology or Dogmatics, we endeavour to present a scheme of religious truth; in the second, Theological Ethics, we build up a moral scheme on the basis of the truth established under the previous head. These, although they admit to a considerable extent of separate treatment, must be regarded as three successive parts of one coherent subject, for each succeeding step is absolutely dependent on that which has gone before. On each of them we shall presently make the necessary remarks; but meanwhile we must point out that this division is exhaustive. Apologetics, Polemics, and Eirenic are indeed included under our present subject; but instead of forming distinct stages in its progress they are only parts which may be found under every heading, but which for convenience are detached, and grouped under common names. Thus Apologetics, in the widest sense, embraces every argument in support of the system, and consequently runs through the whole discussion. It is, however, generally limited to the defence of the divine origin and authority of Christianity, and in this aspect its topics would be considered principally under our first

division, the sources of doctrine. Polemics is the name given to the attack on what we conceive to be erroneous dogmas. This must obviously distribute itself along the whole line of our investigation; for in constructing any doctrine we shall naturally put it into stronger relief by criticising the more important views with which it may be brought into comparison. It is as well, however, to dismiss names which are suggestive of party warfare. We must indeed give reasons for the faith that is in us; but an apologetic or polemical interest is not favourable to the calm investigation of truth, and is apt to display the wrath of man rather than the righteousness of God. Eirenic comes with more benign aspect, and seeks to promote peace by pointing to a deeper unity amid the discordant cries of the theologians; but it does not so much constitute a distinct branch of theological science as mark that largeness of sympathy and spiritual penetration which ought to characterise every religious inquiry.

Räbiger, like ourselves, adopts a threefold division of the subject. The second and third are the same as those laid down above, but for the first he prefers "the theory of religion." Theology, he says, has to answer the question whether the historical phenomenon of religion is merely accidental, whether religion is perhaps only a dark shadow that fell upon the life of nations, and must vanish with better illumination, and is consequently a mere transient manifestation, or a necessary element in the historical life of mankind. This question

must be answered by the theory of religion, which has to point out, first, the essence of religion, and secondly, its historical development.<sup>1</sup> This is perfectly true, and no theological system can afford to neglect the important question which is here raised ; but it will be found that it is included under our first head, except so far as it has been already treated in connection with Comparative Religion.

We may now proceed to make the necessary observations on the three leading divisions of Systematic Theology.

1. *Sources of Doctrine*.—There are three sources which we have to consider—the religious element in man, the Bible, and the Church. It is not meant that these are necessarily co-ordinate or equal, or that every inquirer will recognise them all ; but all must be taken into consideration in order that their limits and mutual relations may be justly determined.

(a.) *The Religious Element in Man*.—Whether or not we ultimately adopt some other source as supreme, it seems clear that we must first of all reckon with the religious constitution of the human mind itself. Religion is, speaking generally, a world-wide phenomenon, and must therefore have grown up quite independently of any particular external authority which may now claim to control it. This phenomenon, if we may interpret it through our own consciousness, is the expression of some profound fact within the nature of man. Again, if we observe the present manifestations

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 454-5.

of the religious element, we are driven to the conclusion that it is not uniform, but assumes different types in different individuals ; for not only do we notice varying tones of piety, but we perceive that men with equal opportunities of culture, with precisely the same arguments before them, and with equal love of truth, entertain the most conflicting opinions, and that in each instance the doctrinal system has a certain correspondence with the complexion of the spiritual character. There appears, then, to be a force in man which impels him to religious belief, and which enters as a factor into the formation of every theological system. This force ought not to be left to work like a blind giant, of unknown origin and doubtful methods, but taken under the guidance of reflection and observation, and compelled to deliver up its secrets. We must endeavour to determine whether it is an essential part of human nature, and, if so, what is the significance of this fact ; whether it points to any ulterior truths, or fairly satisfies our curiosity when we have surveyed it as a mere subjective phenomenon. If we think that it legitimately carries us beyond itself, and contains intimations of spiritual truths which may be expressed as doctrines, we must then examine its nature more closely, attempt to classify its varieties and set forth its laws, and search for a method by which its interior witness may be made to speak in the fullest harmony of tones and to deliver its most catholic message. An examination of this kind will either clear out of our way the false pretensions of a discredited faculty

or furnish us with a source of light to guide us through the tangled thicket of theological controversy, and with an indispensable criterion by which to estimate the value of other sources of doctrine, and to ascertain the relation in which they ought to stand to the mind of the thinker.

(b.) *The Bible.*—It may seem to be a violation of that attitude of scientific impartiality which we have endeavoured to preserve to select the Bible from among all the sacred books of the world. Regarded merely from an historical point of view, they all occupy a somewhat similar position; and if our theologian were a Mohammedan writing in Turkey, the Bible would be replaced by the Koran. But we have already seen reasons which, apart from any particular dogmatic conclusions, justify us in bestowing our chief attention upon Christianity; and, although the members of other religious persuasions would of course dissent from our view, we may fairly assume, as the result of our comparative studies, that Christianity stands at the head of the great historical religions, and holds before the world in its Scriptures the loftiest incorporated ideal of faith and practice. Those who in Christian countries reject Christianity do not embrace any other of the ancient religions, and those who deny authority to the Bible do not accord it to the Vedas or Zendavesta. On the other hand the most momentous claims are seriously advanced on behalf of the Bible, and these we are bound to estimate, and either accept or reject upon well-considered grounds. This, I think, expresses the practical

necessities of the case. All scientific exposition must be based on the existing state of the science which is under treatment, and on the personal belief of him who expounds it; and this is done without prejudice to our acceptance of its successive propositions solely on the ground of the evidence by which they are sustained. Similarly, in proposing a framework for Systematic Theology, we must have regard to the needs of students in a Christian country, to the problems which are actually agitated around us, and to the belief which we already, not without investigation, entertain; but this procedure does not commit us to the dogmas of any particular sect, or place before us any aim but truth in our examination of the several problems which are brought under discussion.

What we have now to determine in regard to the Bible is its position as a source of religious truth. We naturally start with a consideration of the view which has been most distinctly formulated, that the Bible is an infallible rule of faith and practice. If this be true, and if we add, with many Protestant theologians, that it is the only rule, our constructive work has been substantially done already in building up the theology of the Old and New Testaments, and it only remains for us to throw the various doctrines into a fresh grouping, and indicate their relation to our modern knowledge. But if we find that this dogma is untenable, the value of the Bible *as a mere external authority* will be gone, because it contains nothing within itself which, inde-

pendently of any faculty of discernment in our own minds, guarantees the value of one part above another. We must, in this case, inquire into the cause of its unquestioned spiritual power, and ascertain whether it stands in any such relation to our faculties as to become available, directly or indirectly, as a source of trustworthy theological doctrine. If there be such a relation, we must investigate its character, its limits, and its laws, so that in our further progress we may exercise a wise discrimination, and disengage the eternal word from its temporary adjuncts.

(c.) *The Church.*—In regard to the Church a problem presents itself very similar to that which we have to discuss in connection with the Bible. It is maintained by an important section of Christendom that the dogmas of the Church are guaranteed by a supernatural sanction, and in our own time it has been laid down that the seat of infallibility is the Pope, when speaking under certain defined conditions. This doctrine must be carefully considered, for the most momentous consequences depend on our decision. If we believe it to be true, we must thenceforth renounce our private judgment, and work under the control of Catholic authority. Where the Church has pronounced through its accredited organ we may collect the detached dogmas into a system, and exhibit their mutual relations and their position in the world of thought, but we may not question or modify them; for their declarations contain our most certain knowledge, and are expressed with the most absolute

precision of form. But if we see reason to disbelieve this doctrine, it does not follow that ever afterwards the Church has nothing to say to us. We can admit the fallibility of all human judgment and expression, even when acting under the highest influences, without supposing that the long spiritual and intellectual toil, which has slowly piled up the grand fabric of dogma in the Catholic and other Churches, was utterly futile, and reared only a temple of error upon the shifting sands of delusion. Nothing can be more depressing than this cynical estimate of human endeavour, and it is at least as probable that the solemn decisions of Christendom upon questions of faith and morals, even if they are open to revision under the growing experience of mankind, yet shed an indispensable light upon eternal realities without and the secrets of the heart within ; and he who paid no attention to them in the construction of his theology would be like one who attempted to work out a physical science *de novo*, without any regard to the labours of his predecessors. If this be the conclusion at which we arrive, we shall have to ascertain and describe the way in which the experience of the Church may be utilised for spiritual illumination and intellectual guidance, while leaving the mind free from the bonds of a merely external control and the heart open to the highest inspirations of our time.

In laying down these three sources of doctrine, I have not forgotten that the moral and intellectual faculties of man have also to be consulted ; but these

have been referred to under the head of philosophy, and it will be remembered that the religious element was specially reserved for treatment in the present connection. In a treatise on Systematic Theology, completely detached from our general plan of theological study, some of the philosophical questions which we have placed at the beginning of our inquiries would necessarily come under review; but at present we assume that the philosophical courses have been already mastered, and the intellectual and moral intuitions duly established and interpreted. We now pass on to our second division.

2. *Doctrinal Theology*.—The general principles to be observed in the construction of a doctrinal system have been sufficiently explained in speaking of Systematic Theology as a whole. Our aim is religious truth, and for this reason I prefer the name Doctrinal Theology to Dogmatics, because the latter seems to imply that it is our purpose to unfold the dogmas of some particular Church. We profess to inquire as free men, in the enjoyment of that liberty which is justly regarded as indispensable in every other subject of human thought, and to speak only that which after conscientious study and reflection approves itself to our best judgment. In laying out the subjects for discussion, however, it is impossible not to be guided by our present belief. It is it alone that gives us any interest in the entire field of research, which without some antecedent faith we

should view with indifference or distaste; it is it that suggests the several topics, and assigns to them certain relative proportions. If this is a defect, it is one which theology shares, as we have said before, with every exposition of science: the present belief, while leaving the future unpledged, disposes the materials, and is the starting-point for further investigations. We must only be careful to make the arrangement as flexible as circumstances will allow, so as not to commit the student beforehand to any sectarian view.

In the older treatises on this subject (followed by some of more recent date) it was customary to adopt what has been called the *local* or *topical* method of arrangement. All the dogmas being ready to hand, it was only necessary to combine them in a *corpus dogmaticum*, wherein each should occupy its appropriate place (*locus, τόπος*). For this purpose the several articles of belief (*articuli fidei, ἀρθρα τῆς πίστεως*) were distributed under certain heads (*capita* or *partes fidei*), following a kind of loose logical order, but not always exhibiting very successfully the concatenation of thought. The heads usually adopted were four—Theology (in its narrower sense as the doctrine of God), Anthropology, Soteriology, and Eschatology. To these Dr. Hodge adds Ecclesiology, which, however, may be included with Christology under Soteriology, where indeed he places the Word and the Sacraments.<sup>1</sup> This order, though it affords a convenient framework

<sup>1</sup> "Outlines of Theology," by Archibald Alex. Hodge, D.D., Pro-

for a system of doctrine, has been by no means invariably adopted, especially in modern times, when there has been a growing desire to trace the inner connection of dogmas, and to group them in accordance with a philosophical conception of the spiritual principles from which they spring. Calvin, in his great work, "The Institution of the Christian Religion," follows the clauses of the Apostles' Creed, and distributes his material into four books, which treat respectively of the knowledge of God the Creator; of the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, which was first disclosed to the fathers under the Law, and then to us in the Gospel; of the manner of receiving the grace of Christ, and what fruits came to us from thence, and what effects follow—that is, of God the Sanctifier, or the effects of the Holy Spirit; and lastly, of the external means or aids by which God invites us into the communion of Christ, and retains us in it—that is, of the Holy Catholic Church and the communion of saints. This is substantially an arrangement according to the persons of the Trinity—a division which lends itself sufficiently well to the consecutive unfolding of the subject, and has been employed in some more recent works. In the seventeenth century Coccejus and Witsius of the Reformed Church introduced the so-called *methodus fœderalis*, in which the

fessor of Systematic Theology, Princeton, N.J. New edition, re-written and enlarged, p. 23. London, 1879. He places Christian Ethics in the midst of the doctrinal system, between Soteriology and Eschatology, which does not seem a very suitable arrangement.

various covenants between God and man became the basis of classification, and the *fædus naturæ et operum*, and the *fædus gratiæ*, with its three *economies*—*ante legem, sub lege, and post legem*—passed successively under review. This method did not obtain any considerable support.<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, with his profound and original genius, departed entirely from the ancient paths, and attempted a more philosophical arrangement. Taking the Christian consciousness as the basis of his dogmatic system he finds the main division of his subject upon the antithesis which is there observed between sin and grace. In the first part he neglects this antithesis, and considers the unfolding of the religious consciousness as it is presupposed and included in every Christian awakening of the mind. This introduces a discussion of the general relations between God and the world, and the attributes therein involved. In the second part he deals with the facts of the religious consciousness as they are determined through the antithesis. This naturally opens with the doctrine of sin, of the nature of the world in relation to it, and of the attributes of God referring to it, and then proceeds to the doctrine of grace, of Christ, of the effects of grace in the individual, and of the Church. The consummation of the Church leads to Eschatology; and not till all these questions have been discussed are we asked to reflect upon the divine attributes relating to redemption, namely love and wisdom. The doctrine of the Trinity forms the conclusion of

<sup>1</sup> See "Hagenbach," p. 310.

the whole treatise.<sup>1</sup> Hagenbach seeks, to some extent, to combine the old local method with the philosophical arrangement of Schleiermacher by slightly breaking up the chapters, and disposing the topics around the person of Christ as their centre. Thus he would consider, first, God in his relation to the world and man, and man in his relation to God and the world, without the mediation of Christ. For these sections he would retain the accepted names of Theology and Anthropology. He would then take up the doctrine of the person of Christ, and his work for the redemption of mankind. This would lead to the consideration of man in relation to Christ and through Christ to God (subjective Soteriology, doctrine of the Holy Spirit), and of man in relation to Christ and through Christ to the world (Church, Sacraments, Eschatology). He would finally consider God, as revealed in Christ, in his relation to Himself (the doctrine of the Trinity), and in his relation to the world (doctrine of Predestination).<sup>2</sup> The propriety of this scheme depends upon the principle of arrangement which we prefer. If we follow the order of original investigation, in which the practical experiences of life point out the way to the theories which serve to explain them, we may fitly place the doctrine of the Trinity at the end of our inquiry; for, as Hagenbach observes, this whole doctrine remains an unintelligible speculative

<sup>1</sup> "Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsäzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt," 1821-22; 5th ed. 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 310-11.

problem, if not illumined by a preceding Christology. But if we adopt the order of logical dependence, which seems best suited to exposition, we must give the priority to the doctrine of the Trinity, for it is presupposed in the accepted dogmas of the Incarnation and Atonement. Lipsius, therefore, appears to me to be logically justified in returning more nearly to the old local method. He adopts three main divisions, dealing respectively with the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the world and of man, and the doctrine of the salvation that appeared in Christ. The doctrine of the Trinity receives notice under the first head. The second embraces, besides the ordinary topics of Anthropology, the questions of creation and providence. The third is subdivided according to the Trinitarian method, and treats of the economy of the Father, the economy of the Son, and the economy of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Räbiger also gives the preference to a threefold division, answering to the usual Theology, Anthropology, and Soteriology, which last includes Eschatology. He seeks, however, to indicate the philosophical connection of these parts by endowing them with new titles—the revelation of God to man, the division between man and God, and the reconciliation of man with God—subjects which are related to one another as thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.<sup>2</sup> Dorner, in his important work on Christian Doctrine,<sup>3</sup> prefers a

<sup>1</sup> "Lehrbuch der evangelisch-protestantischen Dogmatik," zweite Auflage. Braunschweig, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> P. 482.

<sup>3</sup> "System der christlichen Glaubenslehre." Berlin, 1879-1881. "A

different plan. He begins with the Doctrine of faith, or Pisteology, and then divides his whole system of Dogmatics into two main parts, the first containing the Fundamental Doctrine, and the second the Specific Christian Doctrine. The first part discharges the function of Apologetics, and includes three principal subjects: the Doctrine of God; the Doctrine of the Creature, especially man; and the Doctrine of the union of God and man by means of the Divine self-revelation, or the Doctrine of religion. The second part, the Specific Christian Doctrine, or the Doctrine of sin and salvation, treats first of the Doctrine of sin, and secondly of the Christian salvation, comprising the Doctrine of Christ, and the Church or the kingdom of the Holy Spirit. These examples may suffice to explain the general nature of the methods which have been used in the treatment of dogmatics. It will readily be seen that they are capable of considerable variation; but, instead of pursuing them into further detail, we may venture to unfold a scheme of our own, in which we must endeavour to point out all the topics that properly come under discussion, and to assign them their places as parts of a logically consistent whole.

Without presuming to give any definition of religion we may safely say that it implies a certain relation between God and man, and it is the business of Doctrinal

System of Christian Doctrine," by Dr. J. A. Dorner, translated by Rev. Alfred Cave, B.A., and Rev. J. S. Banks. Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1880-1882.

Theology to unfold into distinct statement the contents of this relation. In order clearly to understand the relation it is necessary to consider the terms between which it exists. In doing so, however, we must confine ourselves to those points which throw light upon the main subject of inquiry. Thus, in regard to man, we must not enter upon discussions which are interesting only to the biologist or the mental philosopher; and in regard to God we must not forget that He has unexplored depths in his being, and may enter into innumerable relations which are utterly unknown to us. In one aspect God is very close to man; in another He is very far off, and religion has always bowed before the incomprehensible mystery of his perfection. Some relations it can clearly discern, others it can feel after and speak of in figures, while it reverently acknowledges the inadequacy of language to describe even its own purest vision, much more the awful Reality which transcends all finite intelligence. If we bear this in mind, we shall perceive the proper limits of our subject, observe a just gradation in the confidence of our convictions, and be saved from appearing, amid our hard definitions, to claim a more intimate knowledge of God than man can really possess.

Our system, therefore, might seem to divide itself naturally into three main branches—God, man, and the relation between them—a division which would be applicable to every school of theology. There are one or two considerations, however, which modify this

arrangement. We cannot lay down any intelligible doctrine of either God or man apart from their mutual relations, and therefore the third branch does not easily separate itself from the other two. We must also remember that man, on one side of his being, is simply a part of nature, and we must therefore notice the relations of God to the world as a whole, thus extending the scope of our investigation. Accordingly our condition is apparently satisfied if we adopt two principal heads—God in his relations to the world and to man, and man in his relations to God. For those, however, who accept any of the positive religions it is more convenient to reserve some of the subjects which naturally pertain to these heads for treatment in a third department, which is devoted to the modifications of the religious life that are characteristic of the given historical faith. We arrive then once more at a three-fold division :—I. God in his universal relations to the world and to man; II. Man in his ideal and his actual relation to God; III. The relation between God and man as affected by historical conditions. In our case the historical conditions are Christ and his Church; and hence our three great departments correspond, like those of Räbiger, with Theology, Anthropology, and Soteriology. These we must now analyse into their subordinate parts.

I. *God in his universal relations to the world and to man.*—In this branch of our subject we must remember that the existence and attributes of God have already

received attention in our philosophical department. A treatise on Systematic Theology which was independent of a more extended course would necessarily devote to these topics the fullest consideration; but in our case it would be sufficient briefly to recapitulate the arguments which had been already used, and the conclusions which had been reached, while we entered at greater length into the specially religious aspects of the question, and found room for a thorough discussion of the ecclesiastical dogma. In the treatment of the subject we must first consider the existence of God, and then draw forth into clear expression the fundamental ideas of God which we have thus obtained, and separate their contents for formal statement and examination.

1. The existence of God. After a recapitulation of the philosophical arguments we must dwell upon the testimony of the religious element, or, in other words, on the self-revelation of God in the religious consciousness.

2. The fundamental ideas of God and their contents. These we may divide into the intellectual idea and the religious idea.

A. The intellectual idea, God as supreme Cause. This presents Him to our thought as the Creator and the Preserver of the universe, and as possessing certain attributes corresponding to these functions.

a. The Creator. Two principal questions arise in this connection:—

(1.) Has God created the universe out of nothing

extraneous to Himself, or only moulded it out of co-eternal matter ?

(2.) How is the theological doctrine of creation related to the scientific doctrine of evolution ?

*b.* The Preserver. We must consider—

(1.) The sense in which God is the Preserver, and the relation of the conservative and the destructive forces which are manifested in nature.

(2.) The continuity of the Divine action, as contrasted with the theory of a momentary creative energy which leaves the universe to go on like a machine, subject only to an occasional Divine interference.

(3.) The question of intermediate agents, involving the doctrine of angels.

*c.* Attributes. Here we must examine the question of God's transcendence or immanence, his omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and unity. The last introduces us to the problem of his spirituality (without body or parts), and to the dogma of the Trinity.

**B.** The religious idea, God as the reality of ideal good. We must notice the attributes involved in this idea, and the implied relations which make God an object of worship.

*a.* Attributes. These may be classed under four heads :—

(1.) Holiness.

- (2.) Righteousness.
- (3.) Wisdom.
- (4.) Love.

b. God as the object of worship. Here He is regarded—

- (1.) As the object of our highest veneration and love, as alone combining the foregoing attributes into perfect spiritual beauty, and thus giving full satisfaction to our finest sentiments.
- (2.) As the object of gratitude, the Giver of all good.
- (3.) As the object of trust, the wise Disposer of all things. This leads us to the doctrine of providence and of the moral government of the world.
- (4.) As the Receiver of prayer, one who enters into communion with his finite children, and raises them into communion with Himself. Here must be discussed the general theory of prayer as affecting the relations between the infinite and the finite spirits, and, in subordination to this, the objects for which we may pray, the conditions of acceptable prayer, and the results of prayer.

Finally, we must determine how far the personality of God is implicated in the results of the foregoing investigation. In order that this question may not degenerate into a mere verbal controversy, we must pay the strictest attention to the definition of our terms.

*II. Man in his ideal and his actual relation to God.*—This subject is immediately suggested by the doctrine of communion between God and man, because, while this communion implies the loftiest capabilities, there is so much in human existence that stands in appalling contrast to it. In order to understand man's alienation from the Divine life we must attend, first, to his ideal condition, which will serve to throw into sharply-cut relief his actual condition. The latter will then constitute our second branch of inquiry, and receive its interpretation in a doctrine of sin.

1. Man's ideal condition. This brings before our attention two distinct topics :—

A. The nature of the ideal condition. This is implied in the doctrine of prayer already laid down, which leads up directly to the Christian doctrine of man's sonship to God. The meaning of this doctrine must be unfolded in the light of Christian teaching and experience.

B. The question whether the ideal was also the primitive condition: comparison of the dogmatic with the modern scientific view.

2. Man's actual condition: doctrine of sin. Three subdivisions present themselves—the nature of sin, the source of sin in the abstract, the occasion of concrete sins or transgressions.

A. The nature of sin. Two elements are involved :—

a. Perversion from the inward ideal : dogma of original sin.

*b.* Faithlessness of will: actual or overt sin.

B. Source of sin. Two lines of inquiry are suggested by the division of the preceding head. We must, however, reverse the order which was there followed. There we could not estimate faithlessness of will without first surveying the ideal and actual order and strength of the motives; here we cannot decide upon the sources of inward malady without first learning the character of the will.

*a.* Consideration whether faithlessness of will is a purely personal and individual act, for which we may justly be held responsible. We must here refer back to the philosophical discussion of the freedom of the will, and view the subject chiefly in connection with the testimony of conscience. Conflicting dogmas must be criticised.

*b.* Source of inward corruption, or perversion from the ideal. This must be found either in our own evil choice or in the fact that we inherit the tendencies of a race, or in both combined.

(1.) The effect of faithlessness of will: strengthening and exaggeration of the lower motives, and decay of the higher, especially of the more spiritual.

(2.) Effect of heredity. Under this head we encounter three modes of regarding the subject:—

- a.* The dogmas of the fall, of the imputation of Adam's sin, and of total depravity.
- β.* The doctrine which refers sin and corruption entirely to individual choice, and looks upon each infant as a new creation in the image of God.
- γ.* The intermediate doctrine, which accepts the organic unity of mankind, and, while unable to receive the form of the ecclesiastical dogmas, seeks fully to recognise and interpret the spiritual facts on which they rest.

C. Occasion of transgressions; doctrine of temptation.

We may divide the conditions of temptation into inward and outward.

- a.* Inward conditions of temptation. These may be noticed under two heads :—
  - (1.) The activity of a worse motive in presence of a better.
  - (2.) Indecision of will.
- b.* Outward conditions or enticements :—
  - (1.) The providential arrangements of the world which cause trials to our virtue, necessitating a consideration of the place of such trials in the Divine economy.
  - (2.) The solicitations of bad men, opening the question why we are subject to this kind of evil influence.

These questions belong, of course, to the

doctrine of providence, but must be referred to here, that we may understand the real nature of the outward conditions of temptation.

(3.) Discussion of the doctrine of the devil and evil spirits.

*III. The relation between God and man as affected by historical conditions.*—Under the Christian system this subject necessarily takes the form of an inquiry into the reconciliation of man with God, for the deliverance from sin is a fundamental and pervasive thought in Christianity. Such an inquiry also arises naturally out of our previous consideration of man as a sinful being. It easily falls into three principal divisions—the nature of reconciliation, the means of reconciliation, and the progress or failure of the Divine life in man.

1. The nature of reconciliation. This question comes first, because our solution of it must affect the whole of our subsequent investigation. Without a clear perception of the ultimate aim we cannot estimate justly the means by which it is to be reached, or the advancement of mankind towards it. We must survey it on its subjective and its objective sides.

A. Its subjective side. The character of this must be determined by our previous doctrine of man's ideal condition, for, as all sin is enmity against God, reconciliation in its completest sense can be nothing less than the realisation of the Divine ideal; or, in other words, the absolute deliverance from the merely animal and sinful into the

divinely filial life. This is the goal of the Christian's hope ; but in a lower sense he is justly said to be reconciled when harmony with the Divine will becomes the accepted principle of his life, when the ideal is consciously operative, though it has not yet worked itself out into full realisation, and a meaner principle occasionally asserts its power. This aspect of the spiritual life will be treated under the third division.

B. Its objective side. This brings in the question of the Divine forgiveness, with its two elements—the changed relation between God and man, and the remission of punishment. In this connection we must examine the dogma of deliverance from God's wrath and from a universal doom to eternal perdition in consequence of Adam's sin.

2. The means of reconciliation. These are, primarily, Christ, and secondarily, the Church, which incorporates his spirit and perpetuates his agency.

A. Christ. In regard to Christ controversy has assumed two main directions, and discussed the nature of his person and of his work.

a. His person. We must endeavour to determine, with reverent appreciation of every element in the problem, his relation to man and to God, and in doing so must review and criticise the various ecclesiastical and heretical dogmas. We may perhaps, in principle, express the main line of demarcation between opposite

tendencies of thought by asking, Is Christ an object of religion or only a teacher of religion? Does he come from the Divine side to draw men up with heavenly strength to himself and to God, or does he start from the human side and simply leave an example of holy living which those who choose may follow?

*b.* His work. This was probably larger, more varied, and more searching than theology has defined; but we may view it under the three following heads:—

(1.) His self-sacrifice. We must consider—

*a.* Its nature.

*β.* Its efficacy.

Here must be discussed the dogma of the atonement and its modifications.

(2.) His revelation of God and his Divine appeal to sinful man.

(3.) His revelation of the divinely human life and his leadership in filial service.

Strictly speaking, (1) is more or less implicated with (2) and (3); but as the subjects are not conterminous, they require distinct heads.

*B.* The Church. We have not now to refer to the Church as an organ of dogmatic truth, because that question has been considered in treating of the sources of doctrine, but we are concerned rather with its essential and ideal nature, and

with the permanent methods by which its purpose is fulfilled, so far as these affect its doctrinal character. Matters of regulation and discipline, or agencies for influencing the surrounding world, which do not affect its doctrinal complexion, belong to the domain of practical theology. Bearing in mind these limitations, we may consider the subject under four principal divisions.

- a.* The origin and ideal nature of the Church. In regard to the first point, although history cannot be excluded, we refer not so much to the historical as to the religious origin of the Church. We have to determine whether and in what sense it was founded by Christ, and received from him a Divine commission. From the character of our answer to this question we must deduce the ideal of the Church, and thereby obtain a test which we can apply to actual churches and a secure ground on which to rest the Church's functions.
- b.* The question whether any existing organisation is the true and only true Church of Christ, leading to a review of the distinction which has been drawn between the visible and the invisible Church, and a discussion, if that distinction be accepted, of the relations between them.
- c.* Arising out of the foregoing is the consideration of the plurality of Churches, their spiritual

origin, and their relation to the ideal Church and to one another. Are they to be regarded, with one exception, as so many spurious counterfeits of the true Church, owing their origin to heretical perversion, or all as genuine approximations to the ideal, deriving their origin from some legitimate demand of the religious spirit, and so supplementing one another's deficiencies?

*d. Functions of the Church.* These must be noticed under the limitation already explained, and require a reference to the agents by whom they are fulfilled as well as to the administration itself.

(1.) *The ministry of the Church.* The problems which call for attention here relate to the distinction of clergy and laity, to apostolical succession, and to sacerdotalism.

(2.) *Action of the Church in effecting communion between God and man.* This is considered under the two heads of the Word of God and the Sacraments (means of grace).

*a. Ministration of the Word.* We must inquire into the fundamental meaning of the Word of God, and the sense in which the term has been applied to the Scriptures. Having previously determined the dogmatic value of the Bible, we have now only to settle its place as nourisher

of the highest life of the Church and its members.

*β.* The Sacraments. Ecclesiastical controversy brings before us three topics on which a decision is required: 1. The nature of a Sacrament; 2. The number of the Sacraments—Protestants generally accepting only two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; while Catholics add five others, Confirmation, Penance, Ordination, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction; 3. The doctrine of the Sacraments severally.

3. Progress or failure of the Divine life in man. As this may manifest itself in the individual soul or in society we obtain a twofold division.

A. In the individual. The various topics which present themselves in this connection may be advantageously arranged according to a principle of chronological succession, proceeding from the Divine purpose towards mankind up to its final accomplishment. We are thus furnished with six distinct subjects of thought.

*a.* Predestination. Under this head we must inquire whether God has any abiding purpose towards mankind; and, if so, what is the nature of that purpose, and how it is related to the human will on the one hand and to the possession of spiritual endowments on the

other. This involves a discussion of the dogma of election and reprobation.

*b.* Grace. We must notice—

- (1.) Its nature, mode of operation, and relation to the will.
- (2.) Its action as *prevenient*, drawing the soul towards the Divine life prior to any effort of its own, and as *co-operating*, aiding the soul in its voluntary struggle towards perfection.

*c.* Conversion. This marks the transition from the lower to the higher principle of life, and raises the question of effectual calling and of sudden or gradual change.

*d.* Permanent condition characteristic of the new life. We must view this both in its subjective and its objective aspects.

(1.) Subjective characteristics, Regeneration. We must here discriminate the voluntarily accepted action of a higher principle of life, which is still consistent with the presence of sin, from a state of indifference or hostility towards the Divine life on the one hand and from a state of sinless perfection on the other. Hence we must discuss the place and nature of sin and penitence in a state of grace, and the question of the impossibility of finally rejecting the divine life which has once been given (perseverance of saints).

(2.) Objective aspect, Justification. This de-

scribes the condition of man as approved in the view of eternal justice. We must discuss different theories of its conditions :—

*a.* That man is justified by meritorious works.

*β.* That he is justified by faith alone.

This opens the whole question of the relation between faith and works.

*e.* Gradual advance towards perfection. This is known as Sanctification, or the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. We must attend to the nature of this work, and the human conditions under which it is carried on. In opposition to it we must notice the quenching of the Spirit and the conditions of degeneracy.

*f.* Final result, the attainment of our ideal—Eternal Life. Two problems open before us,—immortality, and its various conditions.

(1.) Immortality. The immortality of the soul is discussed in the department of religious philosophy. The arguments there advanced may be briefly referred to ; but the doctrine must be here viewed especially in connection with Christian evidences, and as the outcome of our whole theory of the religious life, and of the relation between God and man.

(2.) Its various conditions.

*a.* The blessedness of perfect sonship to God ; the communion of saints.

- β. Question of purgatory for that lower state in which sin has not yet been wholly destroyed.
- γ. The misery of the life of self, excluded from the light of God; nature and duration of future punishment.

B. In society. The ideas and hopes which gather around this subject may be treated under three heads:—

- a. The idea of the kingdom of God as a society of his perfected children upon earth. Relation of actual societies to this idea.
- b. The hope of its progress and final realisation in the world. Here must be examined the dogma of the second coming of Christ.
- c. The consummation of all earthly things. This brings our system to a close with an inquiry into the dogma of a general resurrection and final judgment.

When we have thus laid down a definite theory of the relations between God and man, we are prepared to enter on a consideration of the character and practice corresponding to these relations. This is the task which we undertake in the third section of Systematic Theology.

3. *Theological Ethics.* — The object of Theological Ethics may be somewhat differently conceived according to the attitude which is assumed towards theology in

general. Those who regard theology throughout as a positive science naturally look upon our present department of it as an exposition of *Christian* morals. All Christians must of course believe that it is so in fact; but for reasons before given, we cannot consent to include an historical name in the terms of our definition. As in Doctrinal Theology our aim is religious truth, without any prejudgment of the question whether that truth coincides with Christian teaching, so here our aim is to set forth the ideal morality which springs from the highest relations between God and man, without assuming, in the very statement of our design, that Christianity has exhibited this ideal. Even if in discussing the sources of doctrine we reach the conclusion that the Christian religion possesses the most absolute Divine authority, still it is better in our definition to make it clear that we wish to describe, not an historical conception, but the abiding and universal ideal; though, when once we have started on our quest, we must draw from the sources and pursue the methods which we deem the most conducive to the desired result. We may therefore define Theological Ethics as a systematic exposition of the temper and conduct which, in the various conditions of human life, spring from the deepest and truest religious spirit in man.

This detachment of our definition from all historical and positive conceptions, seriously affects the relation of our present branch of study to Doctrinal Theology and to Philosophical Ethics.

Its relation to Doctrinal Theology is at once apparent, for it is the business of the latter to determine the character of the deepest and truest religious spirit in man. Theological Ethics, accordingly, presupposes and rests upon truths which have been established by Doctrinal Theology ; and instead of these two being parallel and co-ordinate studies, they are really successive steps in one continuous investigation—the former exhibiting the practical outcome of truths which the latter has viewed only in their intrinsic nature and meaning. We are thus relieved from the principal difficulties which have induced Rothe<sup>1</sup> to assign Ethics and Dogmatics to two totally distinct departments of theology, the former to the speculative, the latter to the historical. The usual attempt to distinguish them by their objects, and not by their method and treatment, can, he thinks, only land us in hopeless confusion ; for the separation of their objects rests on an unreal antithesis between knowing and doing, and in fact they have to a large extent a common object, and their topics melt into one another. If, for a moment, we admit the existence of the difficulty, we are nevertheless unable to adopt Rothe's mode of escape, for we have already seen reason to dissent from his judgment upon the proper place of Dogmatics. We are unable to relegate the investigation of religious truth to the historical sphere, and must therefore, if we follow Rothe's terminology, include it with Ethics in the speculative. We use the word specu-

<sup>1</sup> "Encyclop." pp. 28-30.

lative, however, less rigidly than the German theologian, who confines it to a system drawn exclusively from the fundamental facts of consciousness by a process of exact logical thought, whereas we are willing to avail ourselves of every source of information which is rationally attested, and to check the movements of our own minds by the verdicts of experience and the utterances of inspiration and of genius ; but this qualification applies as much to Ethical as to Doctrinal Theology, so that we are unable to distinguish them sharply from one another by their method of treatment. Hence we must fall back upon the difference between their objects ; and in spite of Rothe's difficulties, it seems to me that a code of morals is sufficiently separate in thought from a code of faith ; and that, although in theology the former depends upon the latter, there is no occasion for any serious mingling of their territories. Rothe urges that the doctrine of sanctification, if carried out in detail, cannot but include a complete doctrine of virtue and of duties ; and this is probably as strong an example as can be found of the apparent confusion between Dogmatics and Ethics. But surely the detail, which is the sole cause of confusion, would be felt as a disturbing element in Dogmatics. We ought there to consider the nature, the source, the method of sanctification, but leave it to Ethics, assuming this doctrine, to exhibit its practical application in the various conditions of life. This example, then, instead of confirming the plea in support of which it was cited, illustrates the convenience of separating the two orders

of inquiry, and shows at the same time their intimate connection with one another and their relation, not of parallelism and co-ordination, but of dependence and succession.

It is less easy to determine the relation between Theological and Philosophical Ethics. It was formerly deemed sufficient to say that one rested on the authority of the Bible, the other on the authority of reason. The Bible was regarded as a purely external rule which contained certain commands arbitrarily issued by God (*ex mero arbitrio*), and requiring our obedience without any reference to our own reason or conscience; and the decalogue, as the most solemn enunciation of the Divine will, was made into a framework of the whole system of duties towards God and man.<sup>1</sup> But, to say nothing of the growing difficulty of receiving an authority so completely external, this view appears to be based on a serious misapprehension of Christian teaching. Christianity, instead of thrusting duty upon us from without, seeks to implant a spirit within, out of which morality shall grow, not as unintelligent obedience to an arbitrary letter, but as the spontaneous expression of an illumined soul. Theological Ethics, if it would follow the Christian line, must interpret this spirit, and, though not without reference to Biblical precept and example, draw forth its contents by the laws of speculative reason. Thus, instead of standing over against reason with the blank look of an authority that will not explain itself, it enters

<sup>1</sup> See Hagenbach, p. 338.

the inmost recesses of human consciousness, and claims the sanction of reason in its highest moods.

The broader statement that the one science is positive, while the other is wholly speculative, is not much more satisfactory. If the word "positive" be taken in a rigid sense, the distinction becomes tantamount to that which we have just dismissed; whereas, if it be meant only that the Christian spirit, as opposed to the universal human spirit, is the basis of Theological Ethics, the distinction threatens to become evanescent. A system does not cease to be speculative because the consciousness has assumed a peculiar form under the action of external influences, for this is true of all human consciousness, and not merely of the Christian; nor does the philosopher lose his vocation because the deepest religious experiences have arisen in his soul, and tinged the whole complexion of his thought. This difficulty will be more apparent if we notice Hagenbach's analysis of the distinction under consideration into three heads.<sup>1</sup> The Christian doctrine of the highest good is, he thinks, conditioned by setting up Christ as the highest type of morality, and proposing to every one as his aim to become like Christ. But unless Christ is to be accepted as a mere outward example, whose single acts shall be models for our imitation (and this is expressly disclaimed<sup>2</sup>), he passes into the soul as a moral ideal, transfiguring the whole ethical consciousness, and giving a permanent character to that inward source from which

<sup>1</sup> P. 336.

<sup>2</sup> P. 338.

a speculative system must flow ; and, if in this sense he furnishes a positive norm to the theologian, he is also present, consciously or unconsciously, in the mind of every Christian philosopher, and the ideal good, though it may bear a different title, is yet the same in fact. Again, it is said that Philosophical Ethics must proceed from the moral self-determination of man, while in Christian Ethics the Spirit of God is the determining power, and we thus obtain the characteristic mark of the Christian doctrine of virtue. There is here a real distinction ; but it is not the distinction between positive and speculative, and it is surely arbitrary to preclude the philosopher from surveying some of the most marked phenomena of the moral life. Lastly, it is urged, Philosophical Ethics apprehends man in his relation to the world, and determines his duties accordingly ; Christian Ethics apprehends him especially in relation to the kingdom of God ; and so arises the Christian doctrine of duties. This suggests a mere territorial separation, and involves no difference of principle ; and it brings with it the strange result that, if the hope of the Christian were ever realised, and the world passed into the kingdom of God, Philosophical Ethics would cease to be. We are thus reminded of a practical objection to the distinction which we are considering : in the mind of the same man the two systems inevitably coalesce. It is admitted by Hagenbach<sup>1</sup> that their essential contents cannot contradict one another,

<sup>1</sup> P. 334.

and Räbiger,<sup>1</sup> in noticing their common claim to universality of obligation, goes further, and expresses the hope that, though they have different starting-points, they will coincide in their essential results. But we must advance yet another step, and maintain that they *must* coincide in their essential results, and that, when we come to the application of our principles, the code of duties must be common to the two branches of study. Two men, of whom one is an irreligious philosopher, and the other a religious theologian, will no doubt produce codes more or less dissimilar, because the moral consciousness will be different in the two cases; but the same religious man can produce only one code, for he cannot accept as a philosopher a duty which he rejects as a theologian, nor can he demand as a theologian what he repudiates as a philosopher. The same consciousness, whether it be one which is sunk in worldliness and paganism or one which has been raised by the Spirit to the most ideal heights of Christian faith, can yield only one result; and he in whom the Son of God has been revealed, and who from the depths of his own experience can delineate the features of the heavenly life, cannot at his pleasure abdicate this higher wisdom, and content himself with a caricature which he may label philosophy.

Wherein, then, do Philosophical and Theological Ethics differ from one another? They seem to me to be rather mutually supplementary than co-ordinate expositions of

<sup>1</sup> P. 504.

the same subject, and as soon as they enter the same field, to flow together and become identical. It is the business of Philosophical Ethics to interpret the universal facts of the moral consciousness, namely, our exercise of moral judgment and our sense of moral obligation. The interpretation of these facts constitutes our ethical theory, and is the point where the controversies of moral philosophy mainly centre. When our theory has been established, we may pass from philosophy in its proper sense, and proceed to apply it in the construction of a code of duties. Here we occupy the territory of Theological Ethics ; and, though an ethical philosopher may frame his code without regard to any ulterior results, we cannot but feel, in a wider course, such as we are now sketching, the inconvenience of traversing the same ground twice. Accordingly, the philosophical course may be confined to its own proper pursuit, the discussion of ethical theories, and restrained from elaborating a scheme of religious, social, and personal duties. Now it is precisely the discussion of ethical theories that Theological Ethics can best afford to neglect. It may contentedly assume, so far as it is necessary to do so, the results attained by philosophy ; but in truth its own procedure is little affected by these results. Whatever view we may take of the nature and origin of conscience, it remains equally possible to depict the outward life which is the direct and faithful expression of man's highest interior life. Theological Ethics, therefore, does not base itself upon the theories of ethical philosophy,

or pronounce any decision upon the questions which are there discussed, but rests upon the doctrines of man's ideal condition and of the operation of the Holy Spirit, which are laid down in Doctrinal Theology. From the consciousness of that Spirit, and under the tension of that ideal, it unfolds into flower and fruit the plant of holy and righteous living, as it would spring forth through its own divine energy were it not marred by human imperfection and sin. In the construction of its practical system it will view the various lines of conduct which it describes rather as the spontaneous outcome of an inner power than as actions which are to be performed as duties through an effort of the will, whereas Philosophical Ethics will regard them rather as demands upon our voluntary obedience. This difference, however, does not necessitate a dual treatment, for the two points of view cannot be entirely separated. The sternest adherent of duty or the driest calculator of utility cannot wholly forget the beauty and the bloom of sweet and pure dispositions, and those who most habitually "live in the Spirit" still need the exhortation to "walk in the Spirit." In the loftiest minds these two visions of life will most completely blend, and the philosopher and the theologian will acquiesce in a single portraiture of that ideal conduct which is at once the exterior goal of our voluntary effort and the unpremeditated expression of the profoundest spirit within.

In regard to the division of our subject a few words may suffice; for it is not so necessary as in the case of

Doctrinal Theology to exhibit it as an organic system of thought, and to trace the connection of its subordinate details. Various modes of distributing its several topics have been adopted by different writers ; but as these only represent individual judgments, and there is not yet any approach to agreement as to the course which should be followed, we need not pause to criticise them, but content ourselves with sketching in broad outlines the arrangement which seems to flow naturally from the view above advocated.

The subject, then, falls into three principal parts.

The first part, which is most closely connected with Doctrinal Theology, deals with the inward principle of life in its unity and its tendency towards practical manifestation. This inquiry bases itself, as already intimated, on the doctrines of man's ideal condition and of the operation of the Holy Spirit. It no longer, however, regards these doctrines in their dogmatical, but in their ethical aspect, and views the Spirit as the indwelling power which is drawing man towards the ideal implicitly contained within itself, and is thereby shaping the individual into a son of God, and society into a kingdom of God. Having determined the active character of this power, we must then endeavour to draw from our dim consciousness into the light of reflective thought its ethical quality ; and perhaps we shall acquiesce in the word Love as the supreme term which, best expressing the eternal essence of God, sums up in itself the moral

perfection of man. We thus reach a theory of the highest good and of the final aim of moral effort.

In the second part we must view the spiritual power in the complexity of its inward action as manifested in various dispositions. Since these are dependent for their form on the relations of the Spirit to surrounding objects, we may take the latter as the basis of our classification. We have, first, love to God, which resolves itself into such dispositions as reverence, humility, faith, trust, submissiveness, patience, content, joyfulness, self-consecration; secondly, love to man, which may be considered under the two heads of justice, or the readiness to accord their full rights to all others, leading to serenity and wisdom of judgment, and a prompt admiration of others' good; and next, of benevolence, or the readiness to promote the happiness of others, producing sympathy, considerateness, forbearance, gentleness, self-denial; and thirdly, love to creatures below man, showing itself in appreciation and reverence towards their mysterious life, and in the humanity which shrinks from giving needless pain. In noticing the various dispositions (of which the above does not pretend to be an exhaustive enumeration), we should have to consider not only their intrinsic nature, but the laws of their healthy exercise, and, in contrast with these, morbid or one-sided tendencies which have manifested themselves from time to time in the history of mankind. In this way we construct a theory of virtue.

In the third part we must consider the Spirit as operative in the practical conduct of life. The actions which flow from the spiritual energy within become, in the light of ethical philosophy, duties which we are bound to perform. Here, as we have seen, Philosophical and Theological Ethics meet one another, and having established in the philosophical department the theory of duty, we have now only to lay out a scheme of duties. In doing so we may borrow the familiar division into personal duties; duties to which we are bound as members of civil society, including family, social, political, and international duties; and lastly, religious duties, embracing the private expression and cultivation of devotion, and public duties in connection with the Church, its worship and its work.

Systematic Theology, in thus closing with our duty towards the work of the Church, opens before us a problem which it does not belong to its province to solve. We have to pass now from the mountain heights of eternal reality and permanent obligation to the modest plain of experience and expediency, and consider in what way the majestic thoughts which Systematic Theology brings before us can be made operative in human life, and mankind led on towards that ideal kingdom where truth and goodness shall unveil their perfect beauty, and all shall be at last one family in God.

## SECTION VI.

*Practical Theology.*

If it is a striking feature of our own time that all sorts of literary, scientific, and commercial interests seek the encouragement and assistance which association can render, it has from immemorial ages been characteristic of religion that it endeavours to express itself through an ecclesiastical organism, and to promote its growth through different kinds of ecclesiastical agency. In the practical fulfilment, however, of this single tendency a large variety may be observed. Not only have all the great religions of the world distinct organisations adapted to their respective genius, but within the limits of the same religion there is a surprising diversity of usage. As we might expect in a faith which rests more upon spiritual principles than on an outward rule, Christianity has displayed the freest development, and has adopted many forms of government and of activity, as the creed of its adherents or the requirements of the time have dictated. It is in these facts that Practical Theology, regarded as a part of theological science, has its roots. We cannot but ask ourselves, In what kind of organisation does religion find its fittest embodiment? Through what forms of public worship does it best express itself? Through what agencies can it be most effectively maintained and

propagated ? To these questions Practical Theology must return an answer, and we may accordingly define it as the theory of ecclesiastical organisation and practice.

In this definition we avoid those questions concerning the nature of the Church and ecclesiastical agents and functions which involve doctrinal considerations, and which have been referred to under Systematic Theology. But though it does not belong to our present subject to enter upon such questions, it is obvious that it is deeply affected by them, and indeed rests upon our doctrinal system as its basis. A sacerdotal Church, which claims a supernatural authority for its clergy, or one which believes that the New Testament prescribes in detail the permanent and only divine model of ecclesiastical administration, cannot acquiesce in the same theory of organisation and practice as one which asserts the spiritual freedom of all its members, and holds that the Spirit is the ultimate organising force and can work with greatest energy through flexible forms and a diversity of operations. These different points of view involve profound doctrinal considerations which must affect the whole of our inquiry ; and to this extent it is true that a treatise on Practical Theology can represent only a particular school of thought.

The limitation which is thus imposed on us by the very nature of the case need not, however, contract the breadth of our aim, or impede the scientific impartiality of our search. As in Systematic Theology our aim is

truth, and not the doctrines of any particular Church, so here we must endeavour, not to describe the practice of the sect to which we may happen to belong, but to arrive at that which is ideally the best. If in the discharge of this task we are under the bias of our familiar associations, and can succeed only in setting forth our own conceptions, we are but labouring under the disability which attaches to every branch of human study. But to acknowledge our disability is the first step towards its cure, and is very different from maintaining, with Rothe,<sup>1</sup> that Practical Theology is entirely a positive science, and limited to the existing organisation of some particular Church. Even if we cannot succeed in climbing over our walls of partition, it is at least a noble attempt; and if we can but for a moment lift our eyes above them, we shall obtain a wider view, and learn to cherish more generous aspirations, than if we deliberately confine ourselves within our own enclosure. It is the object of science to lead us from the particular to the universal, and to heal the maladies of the individual intellect; and though the most careful precision of method cannot exempt us from the inevitable failings of a finite understanding, yet we need not doom ourselves to a perpetuity of error, but fix our eyes steadfastly on truth as the goal of all our thoughts. In any separate treatise, indeed, on Practical Theology we must seem to start with an assumption; but if our doctrine of the Church has been carefully reached in accordance with

<sup>1</sup> "Encyclop." p. 134.

the principles already laid down, it will be an assumption, not of prejudice, but of science; and though, like other conclusions, it will be open to challenge, yet we shall be justified in taking it as the starting-point for a fresh line of investigation.

From the foregoing observations it is apparent that Practical Theology is justly included within the circle of theological sciences. This could not be the case if it consisted merely of a number of empirical rules for the guidance of the clergy, or if, while allowing it a wider range, we regarded it simply as an art. Its immediate relation to active life has occasioned some uncertainty in its definition, and some hesitation as to its title to a place in theology. As we have here explained it, however, it is in the main a theory, which attempts to answer important questions concerning religion, and which may be studied purely for its own sake; in other words, it is a science as distinguished from an art. Its results, no doubt, readily afford the principles and precepts of an art, and the student for the ministry cannot but feel his relish for it quickened by its bearing on the practical duties of his office; but it deals with questions which, no less than those of Systematic Theology, "grow out of the religious life of humanity, and which may be treated with a purely theoretical interest, and for this reason, though occupying the border, it claims its place within the theological boundary."

In seeking for a suitable division of our subject we cannot fail to be struck with the great variety of plans

upon which it has been laid out. These are inevitably affected by the point of view of each writer, and by the growing completeness and consistency of the study. It is not, however, necessary to dwell upon them here, and it must suffice to refer to the notices of them in Hagenbach, Räbiger, and Rothe. The most important difference of principle by which they are controlled is that which we have already discussed. Those who would limit the function of Practical Theology to an exhibition of existing facts and a formulation of rules for the discharge of acknowledged duties naturally adopt a purely empirical division, and regulate the order in which the several topics should be reviewed by considerations of practical convenience. On the other hand, those who, like ourselves, desire to raise this branch of theology into the rank of a science might easily be led away into an abstract and *a priori* treatment which had little relation to the realities of life. It will be well to bear both methods in mind. To lay down a theory of a great concrete institution without paying any attention to its actual working, and without inquiring where and how it has succeeded, where and why it has failed, would not be the mark of wisdom. We must profit by the lessons of experience, which is the ultimate test of any theory of practical life, and derive both subjects for our reflection and materials to aid us in the formation of our judgment from the history of the various existing Churches. But, on the other hand, we do not really understand an institution till we are acquainted

with the wants which it seeks to express and the purposes which it endeavours to fulfil ; and even if this knowledge must in the first instance be gathered from the contemplation of external facts, yet, as soon as we have reached the spiritual source from which the whole movement has sprung, we are at liberty to return upon our track, armed with a new principle of judgment, and prepared to criticise outward institutions by the application of an ideal standard. But we may do more than this : we may survey the whole subject from the position which we have won, and determine in accordance with our fundamental conception the grand heads under which the varied material offered by experience shall be brought up for examination. Now we shall hardly be wrong in saying that Churches exist for the expression, cultivation, and promotion of religion through public agencies which require an organisation for their successful working. This at once suggests to us the main subjects which must occupy our attention ; but it does not settle the order in which they should be arranged. We might, with Hagenbach, adopt the chronological order of the Church's growth, and, beginning with the collection and introduction of individuals into the Church, proceed to the conduct and promotion of the religious life within the community, and conclude with the organisation of the Church. But the order in which institutions are gradually developed into their logical completeness is not the best order for describing them when they are complete. Before we

can care to investigate the best means of adding converts to the Church, we wish to know what it is that they are to be invited to join, what new duties will be imposed, what restrictions will be put upon their personal liberty of thought or of action, how their position as citizens and their allegiance to the civil government will be affected: in other words, we must consider first the theory of ecclesiastical organisation. In order to complete our knowledge of what the Church is, we proceed, in the next place, to view its internal functions, and the modes in which they are fulfilled, that is, the various methods which it adopts for the expression and cultivation of religion. It is better to include these two functions under one head, because in practice they become to a large extent identified. We cannot express our religious sentiments without at the same time strengthening their hold upon us; and in the same service that which flows spontaneously from the heart of one may impress itself as an outward influence on the heart of another. Being now acquainted with the machinery of the Church and its manner of internal operation, we are prepared to discuss the agencies by which it may endeavour to propagate religion among those who are outside its pale. One subject still remains. The benevolent impulses of religion lead men who are associated in Churches to pursue plans which are not directly religious for the amelioration of the society amid which they live. Thus arises the question of the propriety of adopting into the specific

life of the Church agencies other than religious, and, generally, of the relation of the Church to such agencies when existing outside its own borders; or, briefly, the action of the Church outside the sphere of religion. We thus obtain, I think, an exhaustive division of our subject, and dispose its principal lines of investigation in their logical sequence. It will now be our duty to describe the subordinate topics which come under the several heads.

1. *Ecclesiastical Organisation.*—In order to solve the very important and difficult problems which here present themselves, we must clearly apprehend what it is that we wish to express and to accomplish; for each member of the organism ought to be in harmony with the idea from which we start, and tend to the fulfilment of the aim which we have in view. An organising genius loves perfection of machinery; but this very perfection might prove injurious to the ease and flexibility of movement which are needed for spiritual growth. The discipline of a camp, where the one end is to defeat the enemy, would be intolerable in civil life, and sacrifice to a military fondness for order the highest interests of mankind. In the same way ecclesiastical arrangements which were admirably adapted to bring the reason and conscience of men under the control of some central authority might be ill calculated to develop the inward resources of the soul, and train it in the exercise of a power which should be at once reverential and free. It

is evident, therefore, that our ideal of the religious man and of the religious community must influence fundamentally our theory of ecclesiastical organisation. Thus we are thrown back (as has been already intimated) upon Systematic Theology. It is there that we learn the idea and the principles to which we have now to give practical expression, and which we must carry with us as a criterion while we endeavour to form an estimate of the various plans of Church government which have been proposed. An allusion to these plans reminds us that, if our principles are drawn from the region of abstract thought, our materials must be largely derived from the history of the constitution of the Church; and in reviewing the several types of organisation we must consider not only whether they are theoretically suited to fulfil the highest ends of religion, but how far the anticipations of our theory are justified by experience. This critical procedure will enable us, upon rational grounds, either to select, in each part of our subject, some existing arrangement, or to suggest modifications in that which seems on the whole to deserve our preference; or, if it be possible, to propose something entirely new.

The nature of our inquiry gives rise to two principal divisions. In the case of the Church, as in that of every organised society, we desire to know, first, the nature, arrangement, and functions of its component parts, and secondly, the character of the laws by which it is internally governed and its outward relations are controlled. Each of these subjects involves questions of the highest interest.

*I. Principles of Ecclesiastical Association.*—These relate to the composition and to the constitution of the Church.

*A. Composition of the Church.*—It is necessary, before everything else, to inquire into the conditions of membership in the Church; for our determination of this point must affect our entire system. In order to reach a satisfactory solution we must ascertain the principles of spiritual fellowship, and to ascertain these we must ascend to the grounds of communion with God; for those who are in communion with Him are bound to have fellowship one with another, and to rid themselves of those lower conceptions which keep them religiously apart. In saying this we assume that the Church is not a private club for the nurture of our own peculiarities, but a divine institution which, in its ideal, embraces the whole family of God. The terms of Church fellowship, then, are the same as the terms of communion with God: the Church is to be, in principle, as wide or as narrow as His kingdom, and to receive whom He receives and reject whom He rejects. We are thus referred once more to Systematic Theology.

Our next question is more purely practical. Having decided on the general basis of membership, we must discover the best means of giving effect to our principle, and of obviating those difficulties which arise in practice from the imperfection and limitations of the human mind. Even among those who accept the same spiritual basis different types of thought and feeling will exist;

and our problem is, how, without injurious friction, to include the needed variety within the embrace of a larger unity. An examination of this problem will supply us with the main conditions to which the constitution of the Church must conform if its inclusiveness and exclusiveness are practically to correspond with our theory.

One more subject invites our attention: are we to regard no one as a member of the Church until he has formally avowed his acceptance of its conditions, or are we, on the contrary, to regard as members all who appear naturally connected with it until they formally express their dissent or in any other way forfeit their rights? or, in other words, is the Church to follow the analogy of a purely voluntary association, or that of the State, which embraces, as a matter of course, all who are born within its jurisdiction, until they either are outlawed or by their own choice renounce their citizenship?

B. *Constitution of the Church.*—Having ascertained of whom the Church is composed, and the general conditions which are thereby laid upon its organisation, we must next decide upon its constitution, that is, the arrangement and mutual relation of its parts, and the provision for its legislative and administrative functions. In entering upon this task we must notice first of all the distinction, which is almost universally prevalent, between clergy and laity. Here our doctrinal view will once more come into prominence, and in accordance with it we must mark out the authority and the general ecclesiastical duties which belong to each. In doing so

we shall have to discuss the question, which is of such vital interest to the spiritual welfare of mankind, whether the Church is to be under the absolute dominion of a hierarchy or the laity are to have a voice in the direction of affairs. It is evident that the character of the community must be profoundly affected by the theoretical conception and the practical adjustment of the relations between these two orders; and till our minds are clear upon this point we cannot advantageously review the actual structure of the religious commonwealth. Various constitutions exist, the nature of which is largely governed by differences of opinion upon this one particular. These constitutions we are now prepared to criticise, noticing the merits or defects of each; and, as a result of our criticisms, we must draw up in detail the scheme which appears to us the best. In doing so we can hardly fail to encounter the question whether any single mode of government is really the best, or the spiritual interests of mankind are better consulted by differences of administration, adapted to varying circumstances, to successive grades of culture, or to varieties of mental bias. The unity of the spirit does not necessitate uniformity of organisation. Nevertheless, where men have mutual spiritual sympathy they desire to express it through some visible union; and hence the further question must arise whether there might not be some federal bond which, while leaving each organism free to fulfil its own vital functions, should combine them all for the culture and expression of their common life.

The order which we follow in filling in our plan will perhaps vary according to the nature of the constitution which we prefer. But we should probably first of all deal with the Church as a whole, and having marked out the broad features of its constitution, treat successively of its legislature, its judicature, and its executive, referring in each instance to the appointment of the requisite officers, the source and extent of their authority, and their mode of procedure. We may then pass on to smaller societies or groups of congregations, till we come to the congregation itself, which forms the ecclesiastical unit ; and we must describe the organisation of these, and define their relation to the Church which includes them. If we circumscribe the organism of the Church by the limits of the nation, we shall have to consider whether some recognised connection might not be usefully established between Churches which are in fellowship with one another but in different countries. The larger question whether the Church ought not to be constituted independently of national distinctions would naturally be discussed at an earlier stage of our investigation, as a part of our inquiry into the general character of ecclesiastical government.

*II. Principles of Ecclesiastical Law.*—Every organisation necessarily has certain rules or laws which define its position and control its practice. These increase in number in proportion to the growing width and complexity of the society, for the multiplication of new relations and circumstances requires new decisions and

establishes new precedents. Thus there gradually grew up in the Catholic Church a vast body of ecclesiastical law. Probably few who are outside of that venerable Church would wish to pile up so elaborate a system of legislation; but even the smallest and most loosely organised sect is practically governed by rules which, even if they are not written or enforced by any acknowledged authority, are generally understood, and sustained by the pressure of public opinion. Hence arises a new subject for our consideration. We have not indeed to construct an ideal code, but only to ascertain the relation which ecclesiastical law ought to bear to that of other societies with which it may be brought into connection or collision, and the general principles on which it ought to be based.

*A. Relation of Ecclesiastical Law to that of other societies.*—By far the most important question which presents itself under this head is that concerning the relation of ecclesiastical to civil law. It owes its importance not only to the immense power exercised by both Church and State, but to the fact that members of one are to a large extent members of the other, and may therefore be solicited by conflicting demands, each with the apparent force of an obligation. Thus is raised the whole controversy as to the connection between Church and State, requiring us to determine, on one side, the extent and character of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the moral right of the Church to restrain its members from obeying what it deems to be iniquitous laws; and, on the other side,

the authority of the civil law over the Church, and the principles by which it should be governed, involving the question whether the State is justified in inflicting penalties for the non-compliance with laws to which the Church has a conscientious objection. Through this discussion the nature and reasonableness of toleration and religious liberty will be brought into view. Here will be the most convenient place to notice the relation of Churches to one another. So long as they are all co-ordinated under the power of the State, they may indeed regard one another with hostility, but their several jurisdictions cannot clash. If, however, one is favoured by the State to the disadvantage of the rest, it may have the opportunity of using its privileges so as to injure its neighbours; and even without a direct alliance with the State, a powerful church may attempt to encroach upon the rights of the weaker. It is therefore necessary to consider the principles by which the interaction of Churches should be regulated; and as amongst civilised nations there is an international law which makes itself felt even in time of war, so there may be, even if unwritten, an inter-ecclesiastical law which shall promote friendly intercourse in time of peace, and soften by its reasonable authority the asperities of intellectual and spiritual warfare.

B. *Principles of Legislation.*—These may be considered under two heads, the proper subjects for legislation, and the means by which compliance with the law ought to be enforced.

(a.) *Subjects for legislation.* We may divide these into doctrine and practice. The general principles affecting legislation upon matters of *doctrine* will have passed under review in discussing the composition of the Church; but we must here treat the question in greater detail, and criticise the usage of the leading Churches. We must consider a problem which is one of growing importance at the present day, and the solution of which will have the most momentous consequences in the future history of the Church, whether uniformity of doctrine is to be enforced by ecclesiastical authority at all, and if so, to what extent. The decision may be given differently in regard to the two great classes of clergy and laity, and we must therefore deal with their cases separately. In regard to the former, we must discuss the propriety and the obligations of subscription or other solemn mode of pledging oneself to maintain a particular system of theology; and in regard to the latter, the advantages or disadvantages of requiring some formal profession of belief before admitting them to the full privileges of the Church, and of introducing theological creeds into the ordinary public worship of God. Under the head of *practice* the principal topics are the regulation of the public services, the conditions of election and the duties of ministers and other officers, and the maintenance of a high standard of religion and morals among the members of the Church at large. It is evident that our opinion respecting the stringency with which rules relating to such matters ought to be

formed, and the advantage of issuing them from some central authority, will be largely affected by our general theory of ecclesiastical organisation.

(b.) *Means of enforcing compliance with the law.* Where there is a formal union between Church and State the same court may be at once ecclesiastical and civil, and then its decisions will be carried out by the whole force at the disposal of government. In such cases imprisonment and even death may be inflicted as a punishment for ecclesiastical offences. But where no such union exists the Church can have no power beyond that which belongs to every private association. It may not infringe the liberty of any subject of the State or impose penalties which in any way contravene the laws of the country where it exists. It may indeed appeal to the civil courts for the enforcement of contracts or the regulation of property; but the civil courts can take no cognisance of private offences against its internal discipline. A Church, therefore, which is not in union with the State is strictly limited in its means of exacting compliance with its legislation; but it may censure, it may suspend from office for a greater or less period, it may refuse admission to certain of its services, or it may excommunicate. Every voluntary society must reserve to itself the right of inflicting some such penalties if its affairs are to be carried on with order and decency; and our problem is to define the suitable kinds of penalty, and discover the best modes of inflicting them, so as to meet at once the necessities

of good government and the demands of Christian charity.

2. *Agencies for the expression and cultivation of Religion.*—We now come to the principal object for which our ecclesiastical organisation is provided. This may be briefly defined as the efficient maintenance of those agencies through which the religious life of the members of the Church may find adequate expression and receive the necessary culture. Such agencies, if we proceed from those which are most purely expressive to those which are most purely educational, may be grouped under the four heads of Liturgics, Homiletics, Poimenics, and Pædeutics.

I. *Liturgics.*—This term properly denotes the science of liturgies or public services. The Greek word *λειτουργία* is derived from *λεῖτος* (or *λήῖτος*) or *λεῖτος* (from *λαός* or *λεώς*), an old Ionic form, superseded by the Attic *δημόσιος*, public, and *ἔργον*. Observe, it is not derived from *λιτή*, a prayer, from which comes “litany,” and does not in its original meaning imply any association with religion. It is, however, used, with its affiliated words, in the LXX. to denote the public service of God, and thence passed in this more limited sense into the New Testament and ecclesiastical literature. The institution of public worship is grounded in the very nature of the Church. As the religious spirit becomes developed it impels men, not only to offer praise and prayer in the retirement of their homes, but to join with

their fellows in a common act of self-dedication, which, springing from mutual sympathy, shall express their corporate life. This impulse leads to the ordinary assembling of the congregation for worship. But besides the regular meetings which express the average and permanent sentiment, the feelings which arise in some of the serious crises of life demand special services of their own, and not inappropriately seek the Church's sympathy and benediction. For the due celebration of these various services forms more or less flexible must be provided; in other words, the Church must have an established ritual. Now, it is the business of **Liturgics** to lay down a theory of ritual, and to follow it into its several details.

In attempting to do this we must first of all determine the general character of public worship, the sources from which it springs, and the ends at which it aims, and thence deduce the principles by which it ought to be regulated. While in the construction of these principles we remain faithful to essentials, we must guard against a narrow and pedantic spirit, and remember the rich variety of legitimate aspiration which the Church is bound to satisfy.

Having settled our principles, we must then apply them to the various elements which enter into the usual celebration of public worship. One of these, however, is for sufficient reasons excluded from the province of **Liturgics**. The sermon, though less importance is attached to it by some parties than by others, is

nevertheless a marked feature in the services of the Christian Church considered as a whole. But it is broadly distinguished by two characteristics from the rest of the service with which it is associated. It is didactic instead of being simply an expression of the heart's devotion ; and, however devout it may be in its conception, and however spontaneous as an outburst of religious fervour, yet, as an institution, it exists for the sake of the impression which it may produce or the instruction which it may convey. And again, it is distinctly and avowedly the utterance of an individual. In it the minister no longer acts as the mouthpiece of the congregation, the authorised leader of an act of worship in which all are supposed equally to participate ; he is now committed to his own thought and discretion, and seeks to impress upon his hearers that which appears to himself to be important. It is true that he has generally been confined by certain doctrinal limitations ; but even in Churches bound by the most stringent creeds the sermon stands out from the common devotion of the congregation as a free and individual act. It is therefore not included under the ritual ; and while Liturgics may fix its place in the organic structure of a complete service, the full treatment of its theory is properly reserved for the separate head of Homiletics. Of the elements of public worship which belong to Liturgics prayer is the most important. Here we must consider, first, the matter which is suitable for public prayer, and secondly, the manner in which this part of

the service ought to be conducted. Under the latter head, besides laying down rules generally applicable to the composition of prayer, we must notice the controversy between liturgies and what is called free prayer, and in regard to free prayer, between the written and the extempore. The next portion of the service that requires attention is the lessons. By the tacit consent of the Christian Church some portion of the Bible has from the earliest time been publicly read for the purpose of edification. The items to be attended to here are the appointment of readers and the selection of the passages to be read. The question may also be discussed whether extracts from the rich devotional literature of the Church might not be advantageously read in addition to the Scriptures, just as the introduction of more modern hymns in addition to the Psalms has so greatly enhanced the wealth and expressiveness of our services. Hymnology is another important branch of Liturgics, and deals with the contents, the form, the music, and the selection of hymns. These three elements constitute the main body of the devotional ritual; but rules must also be laid down for the collection, during service, of the charitable offerings of the congregation, and finally a brief reference must be made to the closing benediction. When we have thus viewed in detail the several elements of which the regular services of the Church are composed, we have still to construct an order of public worship by combining them in just proportion and consecution.

We must next turn our attention to those special services for which the Christian Church has almost universally made provision, Baptism, Confirmation, or some equivalent dedication of the younger members of the Church, the Lord's Supper, Marriage, Funeral, Ordination. To these we must add services appropriated to particular days in the Christian year. The mode of conducting these several services must be considered in detail, and prescribed according to the various objects which they have in view, and agreeably to the principles which we have previously recognised as sound.

In regard to all ecclesiastical services certain questions must recur, which, to avoid repetition, we may most conveniently place in a distinct section. All require some definite time and place for their celebration, and some rules must be laid down in regard to these. The practice observed by the Roman Catholic Church of conducting the most solemn forms of worship in a dead language renders it necessary to say something upon this point; and even the question of dress cannot be altogether omitted. The relation of art to Christian worship involves serious and interesting questions. Architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, have all made the most brilliant contributions which consecrated genius can offer to the expression of religion. Are these to be gathered into the sanctuary, and allowed to minister to the loftiest or the most pathetic emotions of which the human spirit is capable,

or driven forth with Puritanic dread lest the symbol should supplant the reality, and the sensuous form come between the soul and that supreme, invisible Beauty which alone ought to command our homage and waken our deepest admiration ?

One topic remains. What manner of man is the Liturgus himself to be ? On what does his influence depend ? How far can he exalt by his nobility of character, how far destroy by his unworthiness the significance and value of the services which he conducts ? How shall he best prepare himself for his sacred duties, and so sink every manifestation of self in the majesty of his office as to bear all hearts with him into the awful and blessed Presence, and make the worship of the Church truly a spiritual service of God ?

II. *Homiletics*.—The word Homiletics, it is perhaps hardly necessary to observe, comes from *ομιλία*, which properly denotes mutual intercourse or converse, and was applied to the familiar and colloquial addresses which at an early time became customary in Christian assemblies. The homily, therefore, is not strictly co-extensive with our sermon, which often aspires to the rank of a *λόγος*, or regularly constructed discourse ; but it does no violence to the term to use it as generally descriptive of that peculiar kind of speech which is delivered in churches. While, however, it admits of this extension, it is still confined to discourses which are addressed to fellow-believers, and which accordingly allow us to presuppose a certain unity of thought and

feeling between the speaker and his hearers, and does not include every imaginable kind of religious oration. By Homiletics, then, we understand the theory of preaching in the regular services of the Church.

In the development of our theory we must first of all ascertain the specific character of the sermon ; for on this our subsequent rules will depend. What is the object which it has in view ? In what way does it endeavour to accomplish that object ? In answering these questions we must distinguish it from those kinds of speech to which it is most nearly allied—the oration, the lecture, the meditation. Having gained a clear idea of what the sermon is, we may next view it in its connection with Liturgics, and consider whether it is subject to any restrictions from the necessity of harmonising it with the solemn expression of the Church's devotion. The most serious problem that here presents itself is to determine the precise amount of liberty that the preacher may justly and advantageously claim. Is he to speak simply in the name of the Church, and confine himself rigorously within a prescribed circle of dogma ? Or is he, on the other hand, to speak solely from himself, and to fling forth every random thought and novelty that may happen to entice him with a momentary attraction, without regard to the convictions or the needs of his congregation ? Or is there a middle course which combines the advantages of both methods, while avoiding their errors, and is it possible to acquire that width of culture which, though leaving us free to

listen to that which is deepest and mightiest in ourselves, will save us from the tyranny of random thoughts and novelties; and to gain that immersion in the holiest spirit of Christian faith which, though allowing a man to be a prophet instead of a puppet, will yet bring him into communion with the grandest life of the Church, and enable him to find the most spiritual sympathy of his hearers and to penetrate the innermost core of their convictions ? Our settlement of this problem will help us to solve a further question. Is preaching to be permitted only to ministers duly qualified by a formal training, or is it to be open also to laymen who are fitted by their gifts, culture, and religious character to speak with effect to their fellow-men upon the highest themes, and who, not being open to any suspicion of professional taint, and having a larger practical knowledge of the world, might in some respects have greater influence than those with whom the production of sermons is an official duty ?

Having completed our general theory of preaching, we come to the composition and delivery of the individual sermon. Here we must follow to a large extent the rules of rhetoric, only modifying them to suit the particular kind of discourse that we have in hand. In considering the material of the sermon, we must notice first the principles which are universally applicable to the selection and statement of the subject if a public address is to be really effective. We must next investigate the kind of matter that is suitable or unsuitable to

sermons in general. And lastly, we must remark upon the subjects that are adapted to various occasions and purposes. From the choice of the material we pass on to its arrangement. This must depend in part on the nature of the sermon. Some sermons are simply expository of a passage in Scripture, and follow the order of thought which is there presented. These are called "analytical." Others, on the contrary, start with a certain theme, and expand it in its proper logical order. These are known as "synthetical." Yet a third class endeavours, by a skilful selection of the text, to combine these two methods. For the disposition of the subject under these various modes of treatment rules must be provided. The style will next claim our attention, and lastly, the delivery. In connection with the latter we must not only examine the requirements of elocution and gesture, but must carefully estimate the respective merits of the different kinds of delivery—extempore, memoriter, and reading from the manuscript.

We may suitably close our Homiletics by an inquiry into the ultimate sources of pulpit power, and the nature of that spiritual preparation without which we may have an eloquent oration or a logical lecture or a literary essay, but not a sermon—a discourse drawn from the soul's deepest life, delivered through lips that have been touched by fire from the altar, winging its way far into the souls of the hearers, and not lowering them to the praise of a man, but lifting them to the worship of God.

*III. Poimenics, or Pastoral Theology.*—This portion of our subject relates to the more private and personal care which the minister exercises towards the members of the congregation committed to his charge, or towards others whom he may be reasonably expected to influence. It admits less of scientific treatment than the inquiries which have hitherto come before us ; for plans must be continually modified to suit varying circumstances, and true pastoral success depends upon qualities of mind and heart which cannot be communicated by instruction, and in the application of which rules are of much less service than in more intellectual labours. It is, however, possible to point out the leading directions which pastoral activity must assume, and to lay down in regard to each certain general principles, which must be accepted rather as the flexible suggestions of wisdom and experience than as rigid technical laws. The subject, being of an inexact character, easily allows different modes of division ; but it may be found convenient to consider first the general supervision which a minister exercises over the best interests of his congregation, and secondly, his intercourse with individuals affected in various ways, outwardly or inwardly. In order that his supervision may be wise and useful it is necessary that he should become acquainted with his people, and we are thus introduced to the question of regular visiting, and the formation of societies or other agencies for promoting intercourse between the congregation and their minister. Whether any further action should arise out

of the mutual knowledge thus obtained, must depend on a variety of circumstances. Where the congregation is in the main wealthy and highly cultured, the members will be comparatively independent of the special aids to improvement which a Church may provide ; but in poorer and less educated communities the minister will do well to study the social conditions among which his people live, and devise agencies which will conduce to their moral and religious elevation. We need only refer, by way of example, to the diffusion of information by tracts or lectures, and the establishment of libraries, of savings banks, of temperance societies. From these more general labours we turn to those which concern different classes of individuals. The minister, even in a short experience, will be brought into contact with the poor, the sick, the afflicted, the vicious, and perhaps the criminal. He may be called in as a mediator in quarrels, or, without being invited, may have the opportunity of acting as a peacemaker. He will be required to influence men of every variety of spiritual type, the sceptical, those who are indifferent to religion or to public worship, those who suffer from a sense of sin, or are oppressed by doubt, or pine under some other form of mental distress. He will have to listen to the smooth tongue of hypocrisy, the sincere regrets of penitence, the confession of the dying, the triumphant thanksgiving of those who have found for the first time the reality of God. To all these he will have to speak the needed word, and Pastoral Theology must tender such advice as will help the

natural tact of sympathy and love. A concluding section may sum up the personal qualifications of the good pastor, and refer to the means whereby he may cultivate that spiritual discernment which, lifting its possessor above the fear of human judgment, enables him to know what is in man, and to reach the deep springs of life in the various characters that pass before him.

IV. *Pædeutics*. — The term Pædeutics signifies the science of education, and, in its theological use, denotes the theory of that religious instruction which is provided by the Church for the benefit of its members. It is usual to combine with Liturgics, Homiletics, and Poinmenics, only one subordinate branch of Pædeutics, namely Catechetics; but it seems better to place together under one head all the educational agencies which the Church finds it necessary to establish. These may be divided into agencies which are intended for the younger or less experienced and those which meet the wants of older and more advanced students. The theory of the former is known as Catechetics, the principles of the latter we may distinguish by the name of Theological Didactics.

A. *Catechetics*. — This term is derived from *κατηχεῖν*, to sound in the ears, and hence to give oral instruction. The substantive *κατήχησις* was used in early times to describe the preparatory teaching which new converts received prior to baptism. Owing to the practice of infant baptism its application is now modified, but its

general purport remains substantially the same: it still denotes that oral instruction which is designed to enable the younger and less experienced members of the Church to assume their place in the kingdom of God with intelligent conviction and deliberate and well-grounded purpose. To unfold the theory of this kind of instruction is the business of Catechetics. We may begin by laying down the principles on which catechetical teaching depends, so that we may apprehend more clearly the object which is proposed and the nature of the means by which it may be attained. The end in view must next be resolved into its three elements—the communication of the necessary knowledge, the training of the powers of thought upon religious and moral subjects, and the awakening and development of religious feeling. Each of these must be taken up in succession, and viewed not only in its general bearing, but in its relation to different ages and capacities. The question of method will next engage our attention, and we must weigh the respective merits of the several modes of teaching which have been technically named the “acroamatic” (from *ἀκροάομαι*, to listen), in which the learner is simply a listener, the “eroticatic” (from *ἐρωτάω*, to ask), the system of question and answer, and the “Socratic,” which seeks to draw forth by skilful questioning the ideas latent in the mind of the pupil. We must consider also the advantages or disadvantages of catechisms, of lessons to be learned at home, and other means of assisting the memory or clearing the thought. This

will lead naturally to some remarks on the qualifications of the catechist himself. Thus far our theory will apply generally to the religious instruction of the young ; but when we come to the practical agencies for giving instruction we must make a division. Attention is usually confined to the minister's class ; but the Sunday school, if its teaching admits of wider scope, has substantially the same end in view, and may properly be included under Catechetics. For the conduct of a minister's class only general directions can be given, for much must depend upon local circumstances. A Sunday school, however, must exhibit everywhere the same general features ; and as it is a highly complex agency, the various parts of its external management must be brought under well-defined rules, and its various connected institutions placed in their proper relation to the grand purpose which ought to pervade this free and beneficent movement of Christian philanthropy.

B. *Didactics*.—The object of Didactics is to consider the principles and method of a more extended and exact instruction than is contemplated by Catechetics. In this kind of teaching knowledge and thought must take the leading place, and the cultivation of the religious affections, although it cannot be neglected, and may insensibly accompany the whole process of training, will not be so prominent as in that which is intended for less mature minds. Various agencies may be devised for communicating this more advanced knowledge ; but perhaps we shall be sufficiently comprehensive if we

classify them under the three heads of the private class, the public lecture, and the theological college, or the theological faculty at a university. Each of these may be viewed in the light both of theory and experience, and the college especially will afford an ample field for the discussion of the objects for which it should be founded, of the principles on which it should be based, and of the methods by which its purposes may best be realised.

We thus complete our survey of the internal economy of the Church, and are now prepared to view it in its action on the surrounding world.

*3. Agencies for the propagation of Religion outside the Church.*—Agencies for the external promotion of religion may be comprehended under the term missions, and missions may be divided into domestic and foreign. The theory of foreign missions has been variously named Halieutics (the science of fishing, from ἀλιεύω, in allusion to the “fishers of men”), Keryktics (from κηρύσσω, to proclaim), Evangelistics, and Apostolics. So far as the domestic mission is simply a Christian congregation maintained in a poor neighbourhood by a wealthier society, it does not come under the present head, but must find its place in what has been already said about the organisation and work of the Church. So far, however, as it aims primarily at attacking the heathenism which exists at home, and bringing under the influences of religious fellowship those who are practically outside of all the Churches, there is no reason why it should not

be included with foreign missions under Halieutica. The object is in both cases essentially the same, to gather into the kingdom of God those who are ignorant of it, or, if they know something of its superficial aspects, regard it with indifference or aversion. The two agencies, however, are carried on under such different social conditions, and to a certain extent appeal for their support to such different motives, that they require a separate treatment. At the same time they need not be here dissociated, since we have only to indicate the general direction which our investigations must assume; and the main topics for discussion, however they may vary in their detailed subdivisions and conclusions, must present themselves in each instance. First, we must grasp the inward religious principle in which missionary enterprise has its roots, and ascertain its true place and value in the collective spiritual life. Our determination of these points must affect our whole conception of religious propagandism, and is itself dependent on our theological convictions. Next, it will be necessary clearly to define the object at which we aim, to mark off any by-ends which, though subordinate, are still legitimate, and to point out the misleading purposes which can only corrupt the purity of our work. We may then proceed to consider the best means of exciting an interest in missionary effort, of procuring for it the requisite support, and of organising a system of management. The selection, appointment, and qualifications of missionaries must not be overlooked. And finally, we must discuss the

best methods of procedure in carrying on the actual work of the mission in different places and under varying conditions.

*4. Action of the Church outside the sphere of Religion.*

—With the discharge of its religious functions it might seem that the action of the Church was complete, and that it must modestly retire from all other fields of human endeavour. But the disinterested benevolence of religion extends its care to whatever affects the weal of man ; and it is only becoming that an organisation resting on the basis of religion, and primarily founded for purely religious objects, should exert its influence on behalf of the general welfare of society. The Church, accordingly, has largely mixed itself up with secular affairs, sometimes with beneficial result, but sometimes without advantage either to its own spirituality or to social progress and enlightenment. The injurious effects which it may have had render it all the more necessary to include this subject in our scheme of Practical Theology, that we may be put upon our guard against dangers and abuses, and ascertain the limits and methods of the Church's salutary action. Three principal directions assumed by the activity of the Church invite our attention.

First, the care of the poor, which is so congenial to the spirit of Christianity, has from the earliest times given rise to practical arrangements for inquiring into the merits and necessities of those requiring assistance,

and for the distribution of relief. This is a function which the Church cannot abdicate, although its mode of action must vary in accordance with altered social conditions. We may distinguish the provision which is made for its own poor by each congregation and the charities which are intended to assist the poor of a town or district. In the former case a closer personal knowledge of the recipients will naturally exist, the needed help will more easily take the form of a brotherly gift, and abuses will be less likely to arise. Still the best modes of collecting and administering the funds, and the way in which relief may be given so as to awaken most fully the sense of Christian sympathy and do least injury to the independence and self-reliance of the character, are subjects well worthy of consideration. For the proper management of charities which go further afield it is necessary to be acquainted with the poor-law of the country, so that the relief which is given may not overlap, but judiciously supplement the labours of the poor-law officer. It is now a well-established social law that indiscriminate almsgiving aggravates the evils which it is intended to cure; and hence it is necessary to lay down rules for the guidance of our benevolent impulses, so that the highest ends of Christian charity may be secured. This leads to the question of the organisation of charity, so that different agencies may not be working without mutual knowledge in the same field, a practice which gives rise to grave abuses. We must remember, moreover, that almsgiving is not the only mode of ad-

ministering relief to the needy. Various other agencies must come under our notice. And lastly, we must consider the relation in which the Church ought to stand towards the great charities which have been founded by the energy of private benevolence and depend for their support upon voluntary contributions, such as hospitals and dispensaries.

The second main topic for inquiry is the part which the Church ought to have in the education of the country. It is impossible for the Church in this matter to stand aside as an indifferent spectator; for not only are her own interests deeply involved in the results of education, but she would be faithless to her highest mission if she did not desire to see the youth of every country trained in the noblest principles of virtue and religion. The influence of a corrupt Church, however, may be most malign, and many friends of education at the present day view with more than suspicion all ecclesiastical meddling with this department of the national life. Ecclesiastics retort with charges of infidelity and secularism. This schism cannot be wholesome for either Church or State; and it is therefore desirable to discuss the proper relation of the Church to national education, and the means whereby its legitimate influence may be secured without danger to the interests of a wide and manly culture or to the freedom of the individual reason and conscience. Our views upon this point will obviously be controlled by our general theory of the Church and its organisation.

Our last topic concerns the action of the Church in political and social movements. Even where a Church has no formal connection with the State it has a right of petition, its members are citizens with votes, and its strongly-expressed opinion must have some weight in the deliberations of Parliament. It can also address the public through its officers, or in other ways take part in the popular agitations of the time. How far ought the Church to mix itself up in affairs of this kind? Ought it to hold itself aloof in a holy seclusion, and allow social questions which stir the deepest passions and most vitally affect the welfare of mankind to pass before it as though it had no eye for these things, or to step down into the arena with smooth and peaceful brow, bearing in one hand the scales of justice and in the other the sceptre of conscience, tranquillising with words of sympathy and wisdom the fury of the crowd, and with lofty disinterestedness shaming the selfishness of privilege, sorrowfully rebuking oppression and greed, and lifting a glad victorious voice on behalf of liberty and right? If we accept the latter alternative, we must seek for the principles by which the action of the Church ought to be governed, so that it may never contract the taint of earth, nor borrow the passions of the world which it seeks to rule, but, like its great Master, mingle in the controversies of men only to bless them with its love, and reconcile them through its spirit of benign and healing power.

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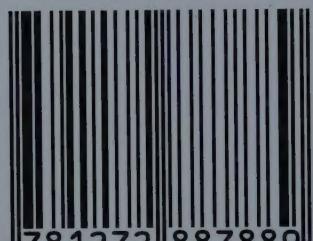
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